THE AGE OF REVOLUTION
(1789-1830)

Volume V
of
AN ESSAY IN UNIVERSAL HISTORY
From an Orthodox Christian Point of View

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Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free… Most assuredly I say to you, whoever commits sin is a slave of sin…. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.
John 8.32, 34, 36.

Governments have no rights.
Percy Bysshe Shelley.

God also has rights.
Pope Pius VI.

The French monarchy must decline into despotism or become a democracy - two opposite kinds of revolution, but both calamitous.
The Princes of the Blood to King Louis XVI.

The government of the revolution is the despotism of liberty against tyranny.
Maximilien Robespierre (1794).

Thou art a man, God is no more:
Thy own humanity learn to adore.
William Blake.

[Napoleon] was beaten in his conflict with Russia. For she was his true enemy. The struggle between them was the struggle between the lawful Empire and the crowned Revolution.
Fyodor Ivanovich Tiuchev (1849).

I am the new Prometheus, chained to the rock to be gnawed by vultures. Yes, I have stolen the fire of Heaven, and made a gift of it to France. The fire has returned to its source, and I am here.
Napoleon Bonaparte on St. Helena (1821).

These philosophers consider men in their experiments no more than they do mice in an air pump.
Edmund Burke, To a Noble Lord (1796).

Out of the tomb of the murdered Monarchy in France, has arisen a vast, tremendous, unformed spectre, in a far more terrific guise than any which ever yet overpowered the imagination and subdued the fortitude of man.
Edmund Burke, Letters on a Regicide Peace (1797).

In a democratic state, one must be continually on guard against the desire for popularity. It leads to aping the behaviour of the worst. And soon people come to think that it is of no use – indeed, it is dangerous – to show too plain a superiority over the multitude which one wants to win over.
Madame Germaine de Stael, On Literature and Society (1800).

Absolute government found huge scope for its rebirth [in] that man [Napoleon] who was to be both the consummator and the nemesis of the Revolution.
Alexis De Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution* (1856).

I hate rebels, I hate traitors, I hate tyranny come from where it will. I have seen much of the world, and I have learnt from experience to hate and detest republics. There is nothing but tyranny & oppression, I have never known a good act done by a Republican, it is contrary to his character. Under the mask of Liberty, he is a tyrant, a many headed monster that devours your happiness and property. Nothing is free from this monster's grasp. A republic has no affection for its subjects. A King may be ill advised and act wrong, a Republic never acts right, for a knot of villains support each other, and together they do what no single person dare attempt.
Admiral Lord Horatio Nelson.

God is love, but God is not equality.
St. Nikolai Velimirović.

He who serves the revolution ploughs the sea…
Simon Bolivar.

Germany needs a war of her own to feel her power: she needs a feud with Frenchdom to develop her national life in all its fullness. This occasion will not fail to come.
Ludwig Jahn.

Nationality exists in the minds of men… its only conceivable habitat… Outside men's minds there can be no nationality, because nationality is a manner of looking at oneself not as an entity an sich. Common sense is able to detect it, and the only human discipline that can describe and analyse it is psychology… This awareness, this sense of nationality, this national sentiment, is more than a characteristic of a nation. It is nationhood itself.
G.J. Renier.

Man seeks ecstasy and transcendence, and if he cannot find them in church, he will look for them elsewhere.
Adam Zamoyski (1999).

Without religion, political science can create only despotism or anarchy.
Giuseppe Mazzini.

The cry "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity or Death!" was much in vogue during the Revolution. Liberty ended by covering France with prisons, Equality – by multiplying titles and decorations, and Fraternity – by dividing us. Death alone prevailed.
Louis de Bonald (1817).

The King reigns, but does not rule.
Adolphe Thiers, Prime Minister of France.

INTRODUCTION 7

I. THE WEST: THE FRENCH REVOLUTION 10

1. THE NATURE OF THE REVOLUTION 11

2. FREEMASONRY AND ILLUMINISM 19

3. THE DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN 32

4. THE BRITISH AND THE REVOLUTION 40

5. THE JACOBIN TERROR 53

6. THE REVOLUTION AND RELIGION 62

7. THE MARQUIS DE SADE 72

8. THE DIRECTORY AND BABEUF 75

9. NAPOLEON COMES TO POWER 81

10. NAPOLEON AND RELIGION 89

11. NAPOLEON THE MAN-GOD 95

12. FROM SALAMANCA TO WATERLOO 104

13. THE GEOPOLITICS OF ABOLITIONISM 110

II. THE EAST: THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION 117

14. TSAR PAUL I 118

15. THE ANNEXATION OF GEORGIA 128

16. THE YEDINOVERIE 135

17. THE MURDER OF TSAR PAUL 140

18. TSAR ALEXANDER I AND THE LIBERAL DREAM 146

19. TILSIT: SUMMIT OF THE EMPERORS 151

20. ALEXANDER, NAPOLEON AND SPERANSKY 161

21. 1812: NAPOLEON’S INVASION OF RUSSIA 169

22. TSAR ALEXANDER IN PARIS 182

23. THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA 189

24. THE CONGRESS SYSTEM 195

25. THE MONARCHICAL PRINCIPLE 200

III. THE WEST: INDUSTRIALISM, NATIONALISM AND ROMANTICISM 205

26. THE ROTHSCHILD CENTURY 206
27. THE DARK SATANIC MILLS 213
28. THE BRITISH EMPIRE 223
29. THE ORIGINS OF NATIONALISM 228
30. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (1) FRANCE 236
31. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (2) ITALY 247
32. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (3) ISRAEL 255
33. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (4) LATIN AMERICA 269
34. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (5) GERMANY 274
35. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (6) BRITAIN AND IRELAND 288
36. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (7) THE UNITED STATES 294
37. CLASSICAL ROMANTICISM: GOETHE AND BEETHOVEN 306
38. REVOLUTIONARY ROMANTICISM 319
39. HISTORY, HISTORICISM AND HEGEL 328

IV. THE EAST: PATRIOTISM AND MASONRY 348
40. THE CHILDREN OF 1812 349
41. THE POLISH QUESTION 357
42. THE JEWISH QUESTION 361
43. THE REACTION AGAINST MASONRY 368
44. THE RUSSIAN BIBLE PROJECT 377
45. THE GREEK REVOLUTION (1) 382
46. THE GREEK REVOLUTION (2) 393
47. THE GREEKS AFTER THE REVOLUTION 404
48. THE DECEMBRIST REBELLION 410
49. ST. SERAPHIM OF SAROV 418
50. RUSSIAN HEGELIANISM 425
CONCLUSION. REVOLUTION AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION 432

INTRODUCTION

This book represents the fifth volume in my series, *An Essay in Universal History*. It is called *The Age of Revolution* because it follows the theme of the French revolution, beginning with the storming of the Bastille in 1789, through the Jacobin terror and the Napoleonic wars to the Second French revolution of 1830, when the victory of the bourgeoisie and of the revolution over the short period of reaction (1815-30) was consolidated. Of course, the revolution neither began nor ended in this period. But it may be called the revolutionary age *par excellence* insofar as it presented all the main ideas of the revolution in their classical French expression, the revolutions of 1789 and 1830, and provided the major themes and symbolism of the later, and still greater Russian revolution.

Even today, many believe that the *Illuminati* of the second, Jacobin stage of the French revolution are at the root of the contemporary (twenty-first century) Masters of the Universe.

As in the previous volumes in this series, this book is divided into alternating sections on the East and the West. In the first section, we see the first French revolution, its continuation and internationalization under the despotism of Napoleon I until the Congress of Vienna in 1815. In the second section we study Orthodox Russia's victory over Napoleon. The third section looks more closely at the intellectual currents of the time, especially liberalism, nationalism, romanticism and historicism. In the fourth, Tsar Alexander's struggle against Masonry is studied, together with the Decembrist rebellion in Russia and the Greek revolution.

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Early modern Europe had undergone four major religio-political revolutions since the fifteenth century: the Renaissance under the leadership of the Italians, the Reformation under the leadership of the Germans, Republicanism under the leadership of the English, and the Enlightenment under the leadership first of the British and then of the French. All of these were potentially universal revolutions – that is, their leading ideas could be exported throughout the Christian world and the Christian nations, undermining Christianity in each and all of them. However, at the beginning of our period, Christian ideas still held sway over the masses of the European population, in particular: belief in Christ as the God-Man and Saviour, in heaven and hell, in the Church, in the normality of monarchical political rule, in a hierarchy of classes, rights and obligations. And the normal pattern of social and economic life remained feudalism. The devil needed a fresh impulse of ideas and energy in order decisively to destroy the stubbornly persistent medieval Christian mind-set of Europe.

That impulse was supplied by the French revolution of 1789, which marks the fifth major turning-point in Western life and thought. It as it were gathered together and concentrated all the apostatic trends of previous European history and then spewed it out into the rest of the world. It was the decisive event that swept away the restraints imposed on public and private life by Christianity and feudalism. In England and America, some of the less radical ideas of the Enlightenment and the French revolution had already been put into effect, at least partially, well before 1789; while in other countries - Russia and China, for example - they did not achieve dominance until the twentieth century. Eventually, however, the French revolutionary ideals, combined with an essentially secularist and utilitarian attitude to religion, became the dominant ideology, not only of Europe and North America, but of the whole world. For, as Eric Hobsbawm writes, "alone of all the contemporary revolutions, the French was ecumenical. Its armies set out to revolutionize the world; its ideas actually did so."1

The French Revolution not only swept away the old religion of Christianity from the forefront of European consciousness: to fill the void thus created, it coopted the new sensibility emphasizing emotion over reason that we call romanticism, and introduced three new, closely related secular and political religions: liberalism, nationalism, and socialism. All three religions preached liberty as the ultimate value – individual liberty (liberalism), national liberty (nationalism) and proletarian liberty (socialism). These three religions often contradict and war against each other; but they all come from the same root in the Enlightenment, and in the long run they all move towards the same antichristian end. In the period covered in this book, socialism was still in the early stages of its development. However, liberalism already well-established in Britain, was given a decisive impetus, while nationalism in its modern, French form, became the religion of the age, creating a whole series of nationalist revolutions in the nineteenth century, each with its own religious fervor, catechisms and martyrs for the cause.

"Perhaps the most significant characteristic of the dawning modern world," writes Paul Johnson, "… was the tendency to relate everything to politics.[2] Therefore traditional religion now becomes less important – except in Russia and the Orthodox East. Indeed, the period 1789-1830 can be compared, for its profound impact on the world, only with the period 1914-45. Both periods are dominated by a national revolution with enormous international ramifications - the French in the earlier period, the Russian in the later - and by international

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[1] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848,* London: Abacus, 1992, p. 75.

[2] Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern, World Society 1815-1830,* London: Phoenix, 1992, p. 662.

war on a previously unprecedented scale. In both periods the main victors were an Anglo-Saxon nation (Britain in the earlier period, America in the later), on the one hand, and Russia (Tsarist Russia in the earlier period, Soviet Russia in the later), on the other. At the end of each period Russia became the dominant political power on the continent of Europe, while the Anglo-Saxon nation became the dominant power outside Europe, going on to dominate the world economically through its exploitation of important scientific and technological discoveries...

Both periods, 1789-1830 and 1914-45, represent the triumph of the powers of darkness, of Satan and his cohorts, against the struggling remnants of the true faith and piety in the world. They differ only in that the first period, the period of this book, sees the partial rehabilitation of faith and piety as a result of the victory of Tsarist Russia, whereas the second sees the almost complete triumph of antichristianity as a result of the defeat and destruction of Tsarist Russia…

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us!

I. THE WEST: THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

1. THE NATURE OF THE REVOLUTION

Western civilization since its fall from Orthodoxy in the eleventh century has been a tale of constant change, constant veering from one extreme to the other in the religious, political and cultural spheres. Like a spinning top, which as it slows down creates ever-widening circles or parabolas, threatening a complete crash and irreversible immobility and death, so western civilization has changed its ideological and political and aesthetic fashions with ever-increasing and more alarming rapidity. As a symbol of this extreme dynamism, we need only point to the ever-changing fashions in the clothing of the secular elites... We can look on these transitions in a positive sense: if the one extreme had not been replaced by the other, complete collapse would indeed have been inevitable. But there is also a negative aspect to this dynamic process: that each transition, while necessary for the preservation of the civilization, took it further away from its blessed origins in the Orthodox Christian tradition.

The French revolution was a giant step in this "progress". For "European politics in the nineteenth century," writes Golo Mann, "fed on the French Revolution. No idea, no dream, no fear, no conflict appeared which had not been worked through in that fateful decade: democracy and socialism, reaction, dictatorship, nationalism, imperialism, pacifism."[3]

The French revolution, like its English forerunner, went through several phases; each on its own was profoundly influential outside the borders of France. The first was the constitutional monarchy (1789-92). The second was the Jacobin terror (1792-94). The third (after the interregnum of the Directory) was the Napoleonic dictatorship and empire (1799-1815). Just as the English revolution had its proto-communist elements (the Levellers), so did the French (Babeuf's failed coup of 1796). Just as the upshot of the English revolution was to transfer power from the king to the landowning gentry, so the upshot of the French revolution was to transfer power from the king and the aristocrats to the bourgeoisie – a trend which came to dominate the whole of Western Europe in the course of the nineteenth century.

It is striking, too, how similar was the sequence of events in the French and English revolutions. Just as the English revolution started with the king's compelling need to seek money for his war against the Scots, so the French revolution started with a severe financial crisis caused by the king's need for money to help the American rebels. And just as the English parliament's refusal to accede to the king's request led successively to civil war, the overthrowing of the State Church, the execution of the king, a radicalization of the country to a state of near-communist revolution, foreign wars (in Scotland and Ireland), and finally a military dictatorship under Cromwell that restored order while preserving many of the fruits of the revolution, so the refusal, first of the Nobles' Assembly and then of the Estates General to accede to the French king's request led to a constitutional monarchy, the overthrowing of the State Church, the execution of the king, increased radicalization and the guillotine, wars with both internal and external enemies, and finally a military dictatorship under Napoleon that restored order while consolidating many of the results of the revolution.

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[3] Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789*, London: Pimlico, 1996, p. 35.

But the French Revolution went much further than the English in the number of its victims[4], in the profundity of its effects, not only on France but also on almost every country in Europe, and in its extreme radicalism, even anti-theism. It truly marked – as the revolutionaries intended it to be – a new, unprecedentedly evil beginning in the history of mankind. As Francis Fukuyama writes, "Early Chinese kings exercised tyrannical power of a sort that few monarchs in either feudal or early modern Europe attempted. They engaged in wholesale land reforms, arbitrarily executed the administrators serving them, deported entire populations, and engaged in made purges of aristocratic rivals... This kind of unconstrained violence became much more prevalent only after the French Revolution, when modernization swept away all of the ancient inherited legal constraints of the old European order."[5]

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From a sociological point of view, France in 1789 had not changed in essence since the twelfth century; it was an agrarian, hierarchical society consisting of four classes or Estates: those who prayed (the clergy), those who fought (the nobility), those who talked (the bourgeoisie, the lawyers and the intellectuals) and those who worked (the rest, mainly peasants). The ideas of the Enlightenment and Masonry had infected a narrow stratum of the more educated classes. But the mass of the population still lived and thought as they had lived and thought for centuries.

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[4] However, "The Jacobins," writes Andrew Marr, "killed nothing like as many people as did later revolutionaries. It has been estimated that forty-five thousand people died in 'the Terror', by public execution or to mob violence; regional fighting beyond Paris saw roadside executions, hanginss and mass drownings in hulk. The death toll runs into hundreds of thousand if civil war and famine are included right across France, but this was not the liquidation of an entire class, at least physically. At the time, France had around 250,000 male aristocrats: the carnage barely starts to compare to the millions killed by the Bolsheviks and the Chinese Communists" (*A History of the World,* London: Pan, 2012, pp. 366-367).

[5] Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order,* London: Profile, 2012, pp. 331-332.

It is customary to explain the revolution as the product of corrupt political, social and economic conditions, and in particular of the vast gap in wealth and power between the *ancien régime* and the people. Discontent with social and economic injustices undoubtedly played a large part in fuelling this horrific atheist and anti-theist outburst.[6] But it was not the king who was primarily to blame for these injustices; even the revolutionary Marat accepted that he was essentially a good man, assisted by good ministers.[7] In the years 1745-89 he and his ministers made numerous attempts at economic reform and a more equitable redistribution of the tax burden. But they were always foiled by opposition at court and in the *Parlements* from the aristocrats, who paid no tax.

Indeed, it is a striking fact that tax questions – in other words, Mammon – played a critical role in all three of the early modern revolutions. Thus Roger Bootle writes: "The English Civil War, which saw Charles I lose his head and England briefly become a republic, began initially as a result of Parliament's objections to Charles raising taxes to fund his wars. The French Revolution of 1789 was similarly partly inspired by a rejection of punitive taxation. The American Revolution of 1776 was also spurred by the issue of taxation, with the revolutionaries' cry being 'no taxation without representation'." [8]

When five of his minister Turgot's Six Edicts were rejected by the Paris *Parlement* in 1776, Louis XVI observed: "I see well that there is no-one here but M. Turgot and myself who love the people." [9] The aristocrats claimed that their opposition was an expression of the necessity of a separation of powers and checks on executive power. In fact, however, they were trying to replace a royal "despotism" with their own aristocratic one. For, As Eric Hobsbawm writes, "the Revolution began as an aristocratic attempt to recapture the state."[10] And here, as so often in history, the "despotism" of one man standing above the political fray turned out to be less harmful to the people than the despotism of an oligarchical clique pursuing only one class or factional interest or purely personal interests. Indeed, the problem with the French monarchy was not its excessive strength, but its weakness, its inability to impose its will on the privileged class. As Alexis de Tocqueville famously wrote: "The system that a revolution destroys is almost always better than that which preceded it, and experience teaches that the most dangerous moment for a bad government is usually that in which it begins to reform. Only great genius can save a ruler who takes on the task of improving the lot of his subjects after long oppression."[11]

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[6] The Russian writer D.I. Fonvisin toured France in 1777-78, and in a letter to P.I. Panin unfavourably compared the situation of the French, both morally and materially, with that of the contemporary Russians. See N.G. Fyodorovsky, *V Poiskakh Svoego Puti: Rossia mezhdu Evropoj i Aziej* (In Search of Her Path: Russia between Europe and Asia*)*, Moscow, 1997, pp. 21-22.

[7] Marr, op. cit., p. 368.

[8] Bootle, *The Trouble with Europe,* London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 2013, p. 40.

[9] Louis XVI, quoted in Stephen J. Lee, *Aspects of European History, 1494-1789*, London & New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 279.

[10] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848,* London: Abacus, 1992, p. 79.

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So the French revolution began as a conflict between king and nobility, which led to the coming to power of the Third Estate, the bourgeoisie, who destroyed both king and nobility.

And yet there was much more to the Revolution that that. To Tocqueville the revolution was more than a secular political process: it was *a spirit from hell*. For it was not simply atheist, but *anti*-theist, *against* God. For the essential conflict between the revolutionaries and the *ancien régime* was a conflict between two ideas of the origin of authority: between the idea that it comes from above - ultimately, from *God*, and the idea that it comes from below, from what the Masons called "Nature", ultimately – from *Satan*, the original revolutionary.

"It is, in my view, impossible," writes Sir Roger Scruton, "to understand the French Revolution if one does not see it as primarily a religious phenomenon. The inner compulsion was to dethrone the gods of the monarchical order, and to erect a new community in its place – but a community demanding sacrifice, devotion, and slaughter, establishing a right to obedience through the spilling of blood. The leading revolutionary St-Just could say, in 1794, that a republic 'is constituted by the total destruction of that which is opposed to it, so abolishing at a stroke the century of political thinking that had come to fruition in revolutionary France. Membership, as St-Just's remark makes clear, means the establishment of a 'we', and the easiest way to invent this 'we' is through a fight to the death with 'them'. The French Revolution was prodigal of opponents – some of them real, as in the Vendée uprising, some of them imaginary, like the quasi-supernatural *émigrés,* crystallizing now in this person or club or gathering, now in that, and everywhere the object of the most violent suspicion and enmity. There is no need to dwell on the parallels with subsequent revolutionary movements and their demons: the *émigrés* were simply the first in a long line of victims – kulaks, Jews, the bourgeoisie – prepared as sacrificial offerings on behalf of a new form of social membership. It is from a deficit of membership that the urge to revolution arises, and when people are hungry for membership, collective violence issues as a matter of course.

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[11] Tocqueville, *L'Ancien Régime et la Révolution* (The Old Regime and the Revolution), 1856, Book III, chapter 5.

"The French Revolution sought to replace one religion with another: hence its fanaticism and exterminatory zeal. But the new religion of the nation was demonic, fraught with contradictions and self-hatred, with no power to survive. It quickly gave rise to the Napoleonic project of empire, through which violence was externalized and a rule of law re-established at home. In place of the attempt to build a religious form of membership with the nation as the Supreme Being, there came the desire for a political form of membership, in which the nation was the precondition of citizenship rather than the object of worship. France emerged from Bonaparte's defeat as a territorial jurisdiction based in national identity, rather than in a religion or a crown. Though both religion and monarchy had been restored under Bonaparte's regime, in altered and republicanized versions, it was the *code napoleon* and its promise of equal citizenship that confirmed the new identity of France. France gained what America had effortlessly bestowed on itself thirty years earlier: a concept of citizenship within a sovereign state ruled by a secular law."[12]

The satanic spirit of the revolution was not single, but trifold, like those "three unclean spirits" of the Apocalypse, "like frogs coming out of the mouth of the dragon" (Revelation 16.13).

These three spirits correspond to the three main phases of the revolution and infuse the three main forms of revolutionary humanism: liberalism, socialism (communism) and nationalism (fascism).

For "as it spread and evolved," writes Yuval Noah Harari, "humanism "fragmented into several conflicting sects. All humanist sects believe that experience is the supreme source of authority and meaning, yet they interpret human experience in different ways.

"Humanism split into three main branches. The orthodox branch holds that each human being is a unique individual possessing a distinctive inner voice and a never-to-be-repeated series of experiences. Every human being is a singular ray of light that illuminates the world from a different perspective, and that adds colour, depth and meaning to the universe. Hence we ought to give as much freedom as possible to every individual to experience the world, follow his or her inner voice and express his or her inner truth. Whether in politics, economics or art, individual free will should have far more weight than state interests or religious doctrines. The more liberty individuals enjoy, the more beautiful, rich and meaningful is the world. Due to this emphasis on liberty, the orthodox branch of humanism is known as 'liberal humanism' or simply as 'liberalism'.

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[12] Scruton, *The Rest and the West,* London: Continuum, 2002, pp. 44-45.

"It is liberal politics that believes that the voter knows best. Liberal art holds that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Liberal economics maintains that the customer is always right. Liberal ethics advises us that if it feels good, we should go ahead and do it. Liberal education teaches us to think for ourselves, because we will find all the answers within.

"During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as humanism gained increasing social credibility and political power, it sprouted two very different offshoots: socialist humanism, encompassed a plethora of socialist and communist movements, and evolutionary humanism, whose most famous advocates were the Nazis. Both offshoots agreed with liberalism that human experience is the ultimate source of meaning and authority. Neither believed in any transcendental power or divine law book. If, for example, you had asked Karl Marx what was wrong with ten-year-olds working twelve-hour shifts in smoky factories, he would have answered that it makes the kids feel bad. We should avoid exploitation, oppression and inequality not because God said so, but because they make people miserable.

"However, both socialists and evolutionary humanists pointed out that the liberal understanding of the human experience is flawed. Liberals think the human experience is an individual phenomenon. But there are many individuals in the world, and they often feel different things and have contradictory desires. If all authority and meaning flows from individual experiences, how do you settle contradictions between different such experiences?"[13]

There are two possible ways out of this conundrum from the humanist perspective. One is to subordinate the "rights" and "validity" of the individual experience to that of the collective. That is the way of socialist humanism.

"That's why socialists discourage self-exploration and advocate the establishment of strong collective institutions – such as socialist parties and trade unions – that aim to decipher the world for us. Whereas in liberal politics the voter knows best, and in socialist economics the party knows best, and in socialist economics the trade union is always right. Authority and meaning still come from human experience – both the party and the trade union are composed of people and work to alleviate human misery – yet individuals must listen to the party and the trade union rather than to their personal feelings…

"Evolutionary humanism has a different solution to the problem of conflicting human experiences. Rooting itself in the firm [*sic*!] ground of Darwinian evolutionary theory, it insists that conflict is something to applaud rather than lament. Conflict is the raw material of natural selection, which pushes evolution forward. Some humans are simply superior to others, and when human experiences collide, the fittest humans should steamroll everyone else. The same logic that drives humankind to exterminate wild wolves and to ruthlessly exploit domesticated sheep also mandates the oppression of inferior humans by their superiors. It's a good thing that Europeans conquer Africans and that shrewd businessmen drive the dim-witted to bankruptcy. If we follows this evolutionary logic, humankind will gradually become stronger and fitter, eventually giving rise to superhumans. Evolution didn't stop with *Homo Sapiens* – there is still a long way to go. However, if in the name of human rights or human equality we emasculate the fittest humans, it will prevent the rise of the superman, and may even cause the degeneration and extinction of *Homo Sapiens.*

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[13] Harari, *Homo Deus,* London: Vintage, 2017, pp. 289-290.

"Who exactly are these superior humans who herald the coming of the superman? They might be entire races, particular tribes or exceptional individual geniuses. Whoever they may be, what makes them superior is that they have better abilities, manifested in the creation of new knowledge, more advanced technology, more prosperous societies or more beautiful art. The experience of an Einstein or a Beethoven is far more valuable than that of a drunken good-for-nothing, and it is ludicrous to treat them as if they have equal merit. Similarly, if a particular nation has consistently spearheaded human progress, we should rightly consider it superior to other nations that contributed little or nothing to the evolution of humankind… "[14]

Is there any correspondence between the famous slogan of the French revolution, "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity", and these three kinds of humanist religion? Up to a point… Thus liberal humanism emphasizes *liberty,* and socialist humanism – *equality*. It is more difficult, however, to see how evolutionary humanism – or any kind of humanism, for that matter – fulfills the ideal of *fraternity*.

There are quasi-fraternities, however. Thus there is a certain national fraternity unity of all Germans, say. And there is a kind of liberal fraternity in liberals' supposed respect for every individual human. And then there is the supposed fraternity of all workers: "Workers of the world, unite!"

Nevertheless, it is striking how little place real fraternity, or *love,* there is in any of the three forms of humanism. Thus nineteenth-century English liberalism co-existed very well with total indifference to the fate of factory workers in Manchester or peasants in Ireland or opium addicts in China or textile workers in India. Twentieth-century liberalism has belatedly corrected itself somewhat in these areas. But the hatred of liberals for unborn children, for example, is still prevalent.

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[14] Harari, op. cit., pp. 295-296.

As for socialism, it has proved itself to be the most barbarous and bloody belief system yet known to man. The revolutions of the nineteenth century were bloody enough. Those of the twentieth century were much worse...

Nothing better could be expected of evolutionary humanism. For it is founded on the bloody and utterly egoistic doctrine of the survival of the fittest. Love for the superman or the super-nation appears necessarily to go together with hatred of the sub-humans of inferior nations. Thus the nationalist humanisms begotten by the French revolution and its German counter-revolutionary antithesis have proved themselves to be completely contradictory to Christianity. This has not stopped modernist Christians from trying to clothe these revolutionary creeds in Christian clothes. But the wolf in the sheep's clothing still manages to snarl from behind its mask of meekness. For the humanist religion that found its first organized and political expression in the French revolution remains, for all its Christian-sounding ideals, the religion of the man-god in satanic rebellion against the God-man.

2. FREEMASONRY AND ILLUMINISM

Both the inspirational and the organizational force of the revolution came, in its first, more moderate phase, from Freemasonry, and in its later, more radical phase, from the Masonic sect known as the Illuminati... This is the first so-called "conspiracy theory". But conspiracies exist, and this was certainly a real one.

1717, the year of the foundation of the Great Lodge of England, was also important as being the date of an Anglo-French treaty by which the Catholic Stuart pretender to the English throne was expelled from France and the Protestant Hanoverian dynasty was recognized by the French government. This facilitated the spread of Freemasonry to France and the Continent. E. Michael Jones writes that "Masonic lodges were established on the continent to bring down the Bourbon monarchy under the direction of Jean Theophilus Desaguliers, who was a member of the Royal Society [and] a Freemason".[15]

As a result, writes Viscount Leon de Poncins, it "evolved in a distinctly revolutionary and anti-religious sense. The Grand Orient of France led this movement, followed, with some reserve, by the Grand Lodge of France, and became the guide of the Grand Orients of Europe and South America. Freemasonry in the United States, while maintaining its union and friendly relations with the Grand Lodge of England, occupies an intermediate position between English Freemasonry and the Grand Orient of Europe. Some of its branches are nearer the English conception, and others the European...

"English Freemasonry in 1723 was in no way Christian; it was rationalist, vaguely deistic and secretly gnostic. The latter source of inspiration is still active, but it had encountered the conservative, traditional spirit of England. Most English Freemasons were men who were scarcely concerned with philosophical or metaphysical preoccupations. The revolutionary and anti-Christian inspiration which constituted the essence of contemporary Freemasonry everywhere, encountered a veiled and instinctive resistance in English Masons. The pact which Freemasonry tacitly concluded with the Protestant monarchy, to fight against Catholicism [and the Catholic Stuart pretenders to the English monarchy], which it considered its principal enemy, contributed to restrain the revolutionary tendencies of English Freemasonry, whereas they developed freely in Europe and South America, and rather more timidly in the United States. In short, the revolutionary virus in Freemasonry is more or less inactive in England, where Freemasonry is more an excuse for social reunion than an organisation claiming to remake the world."[16]

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[15] Jones, "Coronavirus and the Culture War", *Culture Wars,* March 24, 2020, https://culturewars.com/news/the-coronavirus-and-the-culture-war25T00%3A21%3A27Z&__twitter_impression=true&fbclid=IwAR3VxqiaDxjlmG9FC_e743dXv3Ba0OhiZZBunLbnU7mu7pVjQATK-MT__-Y.

This difference between English and Continental Masonry has been denied by some writers. And of course, from a religious point of view, at least until Grand Orient Masonry officially adopted atheism in 1877 and was "excommunicated" by the Grand Lodge of England, there was little significant difference between the two. Nevertheless, from a *political* point of view the distinction is both valid and important; for English Masonry, linked as it was with the nobility and the monarchy from the beginning, dissociated itself from the revolutionary activities of its brother lodges on the Continent.

It was Continental Masonry, springing from the Grand Orient of France, that was the real revolutionary force in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe and beyond. However, the Continental Masons managed to conceal their murderous intentions under a cover of good works and conviviality. This was enough to fool even those who should have been best informed. Thus Louis XVI's queen, Marie Antoinette, wrote to her sister Maria Christina in 1781: "It seems to me that you attach too much significance to Masonry in France; it has by no means played the same role in France as in other countries, thanks to the fact that here everybody belongs to it and so we know everything that goes on there. What danger do you see in it? I understand that it would be possible to fear the spread of Masonry if it were a secret political society, but, you know, this society exists only for good works and for entertainments; there they do a lot of eating, drinking, discussing and singing, and the king says that people who drink and sing cannot be conspirators. Thus it is impossible to call Masonry a society of convinced atheists, for, as I have heard, they constantly speak about God there. And besides, they give a lot of alms, educate the children of the poor or dead members of the brotherhood, give their daughters in marriage – I truly see nothing bad in all this. The other day the Princess de Lambal was elected great mistress of one lodge; she told me how nice they are to her there, but she said that more was drunk than sung; the other day they offered to give dowries to two girls. True, it seems to me that it would be possible to do good without all these ceremonies, but, you know, everyone has his own way of enjoying himself; as long as they do good, what has the rest to do with us?"[17]

However, she soon learned otherwise. On August 17, 1790 she wrote to her brother, the Austrian Emperor Leopold II: "Forgive me, dear brother, believe in the tender sentiments of your unhappy sister. The main thing is, keep away from every Masonic society. In this way all the horrors that are taking place here are striving to attain one and the same end in all countries…"

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[16] De Poncins, *Freemasonry and the Vatican,* London: Britons Publishing Company, 1968, p. 116.

[17] Ivanov, *Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo: ot Petra I do nashikh dnej* (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry: from Peter I to our Days), Harbin, 1934, Moscow, 1997, p. 82.

The murderous, anti-Christian potential of Masonry is seen especially in the 30th degree of the Scottish rite, the Kadosch degree. Here the myth that forms the core of the earlier degrees, the murder of Hiram or Adoniram, the supposed architect of Solomon's Temple, is replaced by the myth of Jacques de Molay, the last great master of the order of the Templars, who was burned alive on the orders of King Philippe the Fair of France and Pope Clement V in 1314, and who was supposed to have founded four Masonic lodges on his deathbed. The initiates of the Kadosch degree avenge the death of the Templars' leader by acting out the murder of the French king and the Pope.

"The Kadosch adept," writes V.F. Ivanov, "tramples on a crown as a symbol of tyranny in general, and then tramples on the papal tiara as a symbol of violence over the free human conscience.

"The king and the pope are symbols, and by these symbols we are given to understand the struggle to the death against 'civil and ecclesiastical despotism'."[18]

This vengeful rite was not just theatre, but a preparation for real revolutionary action. Thus in 1784 in Wilhemsbad a pan-European congress of Masons in which the *Illuminati*, an extreme offshoot of Masonry, took a leading role, decided on the murder of Louis XVI of France and Gustavus Adolphus III of Sweden. Both sentences were carried out...

The first stage of the French Revolution, from 1789 to 1791, was almost entirely dominated by Masons, whose numbers grew at an astonishing rate in the pre-revolutionary years. Adam Zamoyski writes that "there were 104 lodges in France in 1772, 198 by 1776, and a staggering 629 by 1789. Their membership included virtually every grandee, writer, artist, lawyer, soldier or other professional in the country, as well as notable foreigners such as Franklin and Jefferson - some 30,000 people."[19]

"Between 800 and 900 masonic lodges," writes William Doyle, "were founded in France between 1732 and 1793, two-thirds of them after 1760. Between 1773 and 1779 well over 20,000 members were recruited. Few towns of any consequence were without one or more lodges by the 1780s and, despite several papal condemnations of a deistic cult that had originated in Protestant England, the élite of society flocked to join. Voltaire was drafted in on his last visit to Paris, and it was before the assembled brethren of the Nine Sisters Lodge that he exchanged symbolic embraces with Franklin."[20]

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[18] Ivanov, op. cit., p. 64.

[19] Zamoyski, *Holy Madness: Romantics, Patriots and Revolutionaries, 1776-1871*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, p. 51.

At the very peak of Masonic influence in Europe, in September, 1791, Mozart composed *The Magic Flute*, a work that depicts magic, paganism (hymns to Isis and Osiris) and initiatory rites very reminiscent of Masonry. It is known that both the opera's librettist Schikaneder and Mozart himself were Freemasons, as was Ignaz Alberti, engraver and printer of the first libretto. According to one interpretation, "The opera is also influenced by Enlightenment philosophy and can be regarded as advocating enlightened absolutism. The Queen of the Night is seen by some to represent a dangerous form of obscurantism, by others to represent Roman Catholic Empress Maria Theresa, and still others see the Roman Catholic Church itself, which was strongly anti-Masonic."[21] Even if the opera can be considered an advertisement for Masonry (the aims of Sarastro's Temple are said to be supremely philanthropic), the music is glorious, showing that the inspiration for the West's finest art in this period was no longer Christian. The creative impulse in Western Christianity, which only fifty years before had inspired the greatest works of Bach and Handel, had all but dried up…

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The first phase of the revolution was led by the more idealistic kind of Freemasons. But its later stages were controlled by the more radical sect of the *Illuminati*.

The Illuminist order was founded in 1776 by a Jewish professor of canon law at the Catholic University of Ingolstadt in Bavaria called Adam Weishaupt[22], who assumed the name of "Brother Spartacus" (from the slave who rebelled against Rome in the first century BC). Illuminism arose out of the dissatisfaction of a group of Masons with the general state of Masonry. Thus another founder member, Count Mirabeau, noted in the same year of 1776: "The Lodge *Theodore de Bon Conseil* at Munich, where there were a few men with brains and hearts, was tired of being tossed about by the vain promises and quarrels of Masonry. The heads resolved to graft on to their branch another secret association to which they gave the name of the Order of the *Illuminés*.

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[20] Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 1990, pp. 64-65. Franklin was an American Mason, a famous scientist, and a major player in the American revolution in which French and Americans had co-operated in overthrowing British monarchical rule. The American revolution had demonstrated that the ideas of the *philosophes* were not just philosophical theory, but could be translated into reality. And the meeting of Franklin and Voltaire showed that science and philosophy could meet in the womb of Masonry to bring forth the common dream - liberty and "the pursuit of happiness".

[21] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Magic_Flute.

[22] Jasper Ridley, *The Freemasons*, London: Constable, 1999, p. 114.

They modelled it on the Society of Jesus, whilst proposing to themselves something diametrically opposed."[23]

According to Mike Hanson, Weishaupt "recruited five freemasons from prestigious Masonic lodges to form the Order of Perfectibilists, commonly known as the Bavarian Illuminati, on May 1, 1776.[24] The recruitment of Baron Knigge (a.k.a Adolf Francis), a major player in the European Masonic scene, is considered to be his greatest coup; under Knigge's guidance, the ranks of the Illuminati grew to over 3,000. At this point, however (1785), it was declared an outlaw conspiracy by the Bavarian government, and Weishaupt quickly disappeared. According to John Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, the Illuminati organization survived in a somewhat altered form and was the driving force behind the French Revolution."[25]

Nesta Webster writes: "According to Lombard de Langres [writing in 1820]: 'France in 1789 counted more than 2,000 lodges affiliated to the Grand Orient; the number of adepts was more than 100,000. The first events of 1789 were only Masonry in action. All the revolutionaries of the Constituent Assembly were initiated into the third degree. We place in this class the Duc d'Orléans, Valence, Syllery, Laclos, Sièyes, Pétion, Menou, Biron, Montesquieu, Fauchet, Condorcet, Lafayette, Mirabeau, Garat, Rabaud, Dubois-Crancé, Thiébaud, Larochefoucauld, and others.'

"Amongst these others were not only the Brissotins, who formed the nucleus of the Girondin party, but the men of the Terror - Marat, Robespierre, Danton, and Desmoulins.

"It was these fiercer elements, true disciples of the *Illuminati*, who were to sweep away the visionary Masons dreaming of equality and brotherhood. Following the precedent set by [the founder of the *Illuminati,*] Weishaupt, classical pseudonyms were adopted by these leaders of the Jacobins, thus Chaumette was known as Anaxagoras, Clootz as Anacharsis, Danton as Horace, Lacroix as Publicola, and Ronsin as Scaevola; again, after the manner of the *Illuminati*, the names of towns were changed and a revolutionary calendar was adopted. The red cap and loose hair affected by the Jacobins appear also to have been foreshadowed in the lodges of the *Illuminati*.

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[23] Nesta Webster, *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*, Christian Book Club of America, 1924, p. 205. According to his second-in-command, Baron von Knigge, Weishaupt, had a "Jesuitical character" and his organization was "such a machine behind which perhaps Jesuits may be concealed" (Webster, op. cit., p. 227).

[24] May 1, which has been adopted as International Labour Day by the Socialists, was a feast, as O.A. Platonov writes, "of satanic forces - witches, sorcerers, evil spirits, demons" (*Ternovij Venets Rossii (Russia's Crown of Thorns)*, Moscow: Rodnik, 1998, p. 194). It was called "Walpurgisnacht" in Germany after the eighth-century English missionary to Germany, St. Walburga, whose feast is May 1. (V.M.)

[25] Hanson, *Bohemian Grove: Cult of Conspiracy,* Austin, Texas: RiverCrest Publishing, 2012.

"Yet faithfully as the Terrorists carried out the plan of the *Illuminati*, it would seem that they themselves were not initiated into the innermost secrets of the conspiracy. Behind the Convention, behind the clubs, behind the Revolutionary Tribunal, there existed, says Lombard de Langres, that 'most secret convention [*convention sécrétissime*] which directed everything after May 31, an occult and terrible power of which the other Convention became the slave and which was composed of the prime initiates of Illuminism. This power was above Robespierre and the committees of the government, it was this occult power which appropriated to itself the treasures of the nation and distributed them to the brothers and friends who had helped on the great work.'[26]

Weishaupt has been credited with founding the idea of world revolution.[27] That may well be so. Certainly, Weishaupt's Illuminism represents perhaps the first clearly organised expression of that philosophy which Hieromonk Seraphim Rose called "the Nihilism of Destruction".[28]

Fr. Seraphim considered that this nihilist philosophy was unique to the twentieth century; but the evidence for its existence already in the eighteenth century is overwhelming. With Illuminism, therefore, we enter the atmosphere of the twentieth-century totalitarian revolutions....

The goals of Illuminism, writes Niall Ferguson, "were lofty... As one member of the Order recalled its founder saying, it was intended to be: 'an association that, through the most subtle and secure methods, will have as its goal the victory of virtue and wisdom over stupidity and malice; an association that will make the most important discoveries in all fields of science, that will teach its members to become both noble and great; that will assure them of the certain prize of their complete perfection in this world, that will protect them from persecution in all its forms.' The Order's ultimate objective was to 'enlighten the understanding by the sun of reason, which will dispel the clouds of superstition and of prejudice.' 'My goal is to give reason the upper hand,' declared the Order's founder. 'The sole intention of the league,' according to its General Statutes (1781) was 'education, not by declamatory means, but by favouring and rewarding virtue.' Yet the Illuminati were to operate as a strictly secret fraternity. Members adopted codenames, often of ancient Greek or Roman provenance: the founder himself was 'Brother Spartacus'. There were to be three ranks or grades of membership – Novice, Minerval and Illuminate Minerval – but the lower ranks were to be given only the vaguest insights into the Order's goals and methods. Elaborate initiation rites were devised - among them an oath of secrecy, violation of which would be punished with the most gruesome death. Each isolated cell of initiates reported to a superior, whose real identity they did not know."[29]

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[26] Webster, op. cit., pp. 244-245.

[27] Yu.K. Begunov, A.D. Stepanov, K.Yu. Dushenov, *Taina Bezzakonia* (The Mystery of Iniquity), St. Petersburg, 2002, p. 401.

[28] Rose, *Nihilism*, Forestville, Ca.: Fr. Seraphim Rose Foundation, 1994, p. 54.

"Our strength," wrote Weishaupt, "lies in secrecy. Therefore we must without hesitation use as a cover some innocent societies. The lodges of blue masonry are a fitting veil to hide our real aims, since the world is accustomed to expecting nothing important or constructive from them. Their ceremonies are considered pretty trifles for the amusement of big children. The name of a learned society is also a magnificent mask behind which we can hide our lower degrees."[30]

"Weishaupt constructed his organization on several levels, revealing his most radical plans only to his chosen co-workers. Weishaupt chose the members of his organization mainly amidst young people, carefully studying each candidature.

"Having sifted out the unreliable and dubious, the leaders of the order performed on the rest a rite of consecration, which took place after a three-day fast in a dark basement. Every candidate was consecrated separately, having first had his arms and legs bound. [Then] from various corners of the dark basement the most unexpected questions were showered upon the initiate.

"Having replied to the questions, he swore absolute obedience to the leaders of the order. Every new member signed that he would preserve the secrets of the organization under fear of the death penalty.

"However, the newcomer was not yet considered to be a full member of the organization, but received the status of novice and for one to three months had to be under the observation of an experienced *illuminé*. He was told to keep a special diary and regularly present it to the leaders. The novice filled in numerous questionnaires, and also prepared monthly accounts of all matters linking him with the order. Having passed through all the trials, the novice underwent a second initiation, now as a fully-fledged member.

"After his initiation the new member was given a distinguishing sign, gesture and password, which changed depending on the rank he occupied.

"The newcomer received a special pseudonym (order's name), usually borrowed from ancient history..., and got to know an ancient

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[29] Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower,* London: Penguin, 2018, pp. 4-5.

[30] Platonov, op. cit., p. 195.

Persian method of timekeeping, the geography of the order, and also a secret code.

"Weishaupt imposed into the order a system of global spying and mutual tailing.

"Most of the members were at the lowest level of the hierarchy.

"No less than a thousand people entered the organization, but for conspiratorial purposes each member knew only a few people. As Weishaupt himself noted, 'directly under me there are two, who are completely inspired by me myself, while under each of them are two, etc. Thus I can stir up and put into motion a thousand people. This is how one must command and act in politics."[31]

"Do you realize sufficiently," he wrote in the discourse of the reception of the *Illuminatus Dirigens*, "what it means to rule - to rule in a secret society? Not only over the lesser or more important of the populace, but over the best men, over men of all ranks, nations, and religions, to rule without external force, to unite them indissolubly, to breathe one spirit and soul into them, men distributed over all parts of the world?"[32]

The *supposed* aim of the new Order was to improve the present system of government and to abolish "the slavery of the peasants, the servitude of men to the soil, the rights of *main morte* and all the customs and privileges which abase humanity, the *corvées* under the condition of an equitable equivalent, all the corporations, all the *maîtrises*, all the burdens imposed on industry and commerce by customs, excise duties, and taxes... to procure a universal toleration for all religious opinions... to take away all the arms of superstitions, to favour the liberty of the press, etc."[33]

This was almost exactly the same programme as that carried out by the Constituent Assembly at the beginning of the revolution in 1789-91 under the leadership of, among others, the same Count Mirabeau - a remarkable coincidence!

However, this liberal democratic programme was soon forgotten when Weishaupt took over control of the Order. For "Spartacus" had elaborated a much more radical programme, a programme that was to resemble the socialism of the later, more radical stages of the revolution. "Weishaupt had made into an absolute theory the misanthropic gibes [*boutades]* of Rousseau at the invention of property and society, and without taking into account the statement so distinctly formulated by Rousseau on the impossibility of suppressing property and society once they had been established, he proposed as the end of Illuminism the abolition of property, social authority, of nationality, and the return of the human race to the happy state in which it formed only a single family without artificial needs, without useless sciences, every father being priest and magistrate. Priest of we know not what religion, for in spite of their frequent invocations of the God of Nature, many indications lead us to conclude that Weishaupt had, like Diderot and d'Holbach, no other God than Nature herself..."[34]

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[31] Platonov, op. cit., pp. 195-196.

[32] Webster, op. cit., p. 221.

[33] Webster, op. cit., p. 205.

Weishaupt used the religious forms of Masonry, and invented a few "mysteries" himself. But his aim was the foundation of a *political* secret organization controlled by himself. His political theory, according to Webster, was "no other than that of modern Anarchy, that man should govern himself and rulers should be gradually done away with. But he is careful to deprecate all ideas of violent revolution - the process is to be accomplished by the most peaceful methods. Let us see how gently he leads up to the final conclusion:

"'The first stage in the life of the whole human race is savagery, rough nature, in which the family is the only society, and hunger and thirst are easily satisfied... in which man enjoys the two most excellent goods, Equality and Liberty, to their fullest extent. ... In these circumstances... health was his usual condition... Happy men, who were not yet enough enlightened to lose their peace of mind and to be conscious of the unhappy mainsprings and causes of our misery, love of power... envy... illnesses and all the results of imagination.'

"The manner in which man fell from this primitive state of felicity is then described:

"'As families increased, means of subsistence began to lack, the nomadic life ceased, property was instituted, men established themselves firmly, and through agriculture families drew near each other, thereby language developed and through living together men began to measure themselves against each other, etc... But here was the cause of the downfall of freedom; equality vanished. Man felt new unknown needs...'

And in the passages that follow we find the old ruse of representing Christ as a Communist and as a secret-society adept. Thus he goes on to explain that 'if Jesus preaches contempt of riches, He wishes to teach us the reasonable use of them and prepare for the community of goods introduced by Him,' and in which, Weishaupt adds later, He lived with

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[34] Henri Martin, *Histoire de France (History of France)*, XVI, 533; in Webster, op. cit., p. 207.

His disciples. But this secret doctrine is only to be apprehended by initiates...

"Weishaupt thus contrives to give a purely political interpretation to Christ's teaching:

"'The secret preserved through the *Disciplina Arcani*, and the aim appearing through all His words and deeds, is to give back to men their original liberty and equality... Now one can understand how far Jesus was the Redeemer and Saviour of the world.'

"The mission of Christ was therefore by means of Reason to make men capable of freedom: 'When at last reason becomes the religion of man, so will the problem be solved.'

"Weishaupt goes on to show that Freemasonry can be interpreted in the same manner. The secret doctrine concealed in the teaching of Christ was handed down by initiates who 'hid themselves and their doctrine under the cover of Freemasonry,' and in a long explanation of Masonic hieroglyphics he indicates the analogies between the Hiramic legend and the story of Christ. 'I say then Hiram is Christ.'... In this manner Weishaupt demonstrates that 'Freemasonry is hidden Christianity... But this is of course only the secret of what Weishaupt calls 'real Freemasonry' in contradistinction to the official kind, which he regards as totally unenlightened."[35]

But the whole of this religious side of Weishaupt's system is in fact simply a ruse, a cover, by which to attract religious men. Weishaupt himself despised religion: "You cannot imagine," he wrote, "what consideration and sensation our Priest's degree is arousing. The most wonderful thing is that great Protestant and reformed theologians who belong to 0 [Illuminism] still believe that the religious teaching imparted in it contains the true and genuine spirit of the Christian religion. Oh! men, of what cannot you be persuaded? I never thought that I should become the founder of a new religion."[36]

Only gradually, and only to a very few of his closest associates, did Weishaupt reveal the real purpose of his order - the revolutionary overthrow of the whole of society, civil and religious. Elements of all religions and philosophical systems, including Christianity and Masonry, were used by Weishaupt to enrol a body of influential men[37] who would obey him in all things while knowing neither him personally nor the real aims of the secret society they had been initiated into. The use of codes and pseudonyms, and the pyramidal structure of his organization, whereby nobody on a lower level knew what was happening on the one above his, while those on the higher levels knew everything about what was happening below them, was copied by all succeeding revolutionary organizations.

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[35] Webster, op. cit., pp. 213-217.

[36] Webster, op. cit., pp. 218-219.

[37] Ridley, op. cit., p. 115. Ferguson says that the Order numbered only sixty members in 1779, rising to more than 1,300 a few years later (op. cit., p. 4). By 1785, according to Hanson (op. cit.), it was over 3000.

In 1782 Weishaupt convened a Universal Congress of *Illuminati* in Wilhelmsbad, and was well on the way to taking over Freemasonry (under the guise of its reform). By this time, writes Ferguson, "the Illuminati network extended throughout much of Germany. Moreover, an impressive list of German princes had joined the Order: Ferdinand, prince of Brunswick-Lüneberg-Wolfenbüttel; Charles, prince of Hesse-Cassel; Ernest II, duke of Saxe-Coburg-Altenburg; and Charles August, grand duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach; as well as dozens of noblemen such as Franz Friedrich von Ditfurth, and the rising star of the Rhineland clergy, Theodor von Dalberg. Serving many of the most exalted Illuminati as advisers were other members of the Order. Intellectuals, too, became Illuminati, notably the polymath Johann Wolfgang Goethe, the philosophers Johann Gottfried Herder and Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, the translator Johann Joachim Christoph Bode, and the Swiss educationalist Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. Though he did not join, the dramatist Friedrich Schiller based the republican revolutionary character of Posa in his *Don Carlos* (1787) on a leading member of the Illuminati."[38]

In July, 1785, an *Illuminatus* was struck by lightning and papers found on him led to the Bavarian government banning the organization. "Some fled Bavaria. Others lost their jobs or were exiled. At least two were imprisoned. The founder himself sought refuge in Gotha. For all intents and purposes the Illuminati had ceased to function by the end of 1787. Nevertheless, their infamy long outlived them. King Frederick William II of Prussia was warned that the Illuminati remained a dangerously subversive force throughout Germany."[39]

Ferguson believes that the Illuminati were easily crushed and had no significant effect on the French Revolution. Others, however, believe that Weishaupt transferred the centre of his operations to France, where his influence continued to spread. Thus the Parisian lodge of the *Amis Réunis*, renamed the *Ennemis Réunis*, gathered together all the really radical Masons from various other lodges, many of which were still royalist, and turned them, often unconsciously, into agents of Weishaupt. These adepts included no less than thirty princes. For it was characteristic of the revolution that among those who were most swept up by the madness of its intoxication were those who stood to lose most from it. Some far-sighted men, such as the Apostolic Nuncio in Vienna and the Marquis de Luchet, warned against Illuminism, and de Luchet predicted almost exactly the course of events that the revolution would take on the basis of his knowledge of the order. But no one paid any attention. But then, in October, 1789 a pamphlet was seized in the house of the wife of Mirabeau's publisher among Mirabeau's papers and published two years later.

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[38] Ferguson, op. cit. p. 4.
[39] Ferguson, op. cit. p. 5.

"Beginning with a diatribe against the French monarchy," writes Webster, "the document goes on to say that 'in order to triumph over this hydra-headed monster these are my ideas':

"'We must overthrow all order, suppress all laws, annul all power, and leave the people in anarchy. The law we establish will not perhaps be in force at once, but at any rate, having given back the power to the people, they will resist for the sake of the liberty which they will believe they are preserving. We must caress their vanity, flatter their hopes, promise them happiness after our work has been in operation; we must elude their caprices and their systems at will, for the people as legislators are very dangerous, they only establish laws which coincide with their passions, their want of knowledge would besides only give birth to abuses. But as the people are a lever which legislators can move at their will, we must necessarily use them as a support, and render hateful to them everything we wish to destroy and sow illusions in their path; we must also buy all the mercenary pens which propagate our methods and which will instruct the people concerning their enemies which we attack. The clergy, being the most powerful through public opinion, can only be destroyed by ridiculing religion, rendering its ministers odious, and only representing them as hypocritical monsters& Libels must at every moment show fresh traces of hatred against the clergy. To exaggerate their riches, to make the sins of an individual appear to be common to all, to attribute to them all vices; calumny, murder, irreligion, sacrilege, all is permitted in times of revolution.'

"'We must degrade the *noblesse* and attribute it to an odious origin, establish a germ of equality which can never exist but which will flatter the people; [we must] immolate the most obstinate, burn and destroy their property in order to intimidate the rest, so that if we cannot entirely destroy this prejudice we can weaken it and the people will avenge their vanity and their jealousy by all the excesses which will bring them to submission.'

"After describing how the soldiers are to be seduced from their allegiance, and the magistrates represented to the people as despots, 'since the people, brutal and ignorant, only see the evil and never the good of things,' the writer explains they must be given only limited power in the municipalities.

"'Let us beware above all of giving them too much force; their despotism is too dangerous, we must flatter the people by gratuitous justice, promise them a great diminution in taxes and a more equal division, more extension in fortunes, and less humiliation. These phantasies [*vertiges]* will fanaticise the people, who will flatten out all resistance. What matter the victims and their numbers? Spoliations, destructions, burnings, and all the necessary effects of a revolution? Nothing must be sacred and we can say with Machiavelli: 'What matter the means as long as one arrives at the end?'"[40]

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In 1797, a former French Jesuit called Augustin de Barruel published a five-volume *Mémoire pour servir à l'histoire du jacobinisme*, which argued, as Norman Cohn writes, that "the French Revolution represented the culmination of an age-old conspiracy of the most secret of secret societies. As he saw it, the trouble began with the medieval Order of Templars, which had not really been exterminated in 1314 but had survived as a secret society. Pledged to abolish all monarchies, to overthrow the papacy, to preach unrestricted liberty to all peoples and to found a world-republic under its own control. Down the centuries this secret society had poisoned a number of monarchs; and in the eighteenth century it had captured the Order of Freemasons, which now stood entirely under its control. In 1763 it had created a secret literary academy, consisting of Voltaire, Turgot, Condorcet, Diderot, and d'Alambert, and meeting regularly in the house of the Baron d'Holbach; by its publications this body had undermined all morality and true religion among the French. From 1776 onwards Condorcet and the Abbé Sieyès had built up a vast revolutionary organization of half a million Frenchmen, who were the Jacobins of the revolution. But the heart of the conspiracy, the true leaders of the revolution, were the Bavarian Illuminati under Adam Weishaupt - 'enemies of the human race, sons of Satan'. To this handful of Germans all the Freemasons and Jacobins of France owed blind allegiance; and it was Barruel's view that unless it was stopped, this handful would soon dominate the world."[41]

In the same vein and at about the same time, writes Ferguson, "the eminent Scottish physicist John Robison published *Proofs of a Conspiracy against All the Religions and Governments of Europe, carried out in the Secret Meetings of the Free Masons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies,* in which he claimed that, 'through a course of fifty years, under the specious pretexts of enlightening the world by the torch of philosophy, and of dispelling the clouds of civil and religious superstition', an 'association' had been 'exerting itself zealously and systematically, till it had become almost irresistible', with the goal of 'ROOTING OUT ALL THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS, AND OVERTURNING ALL THE EXISTING GOVERNMENTS OF EUROPE'. The culmination of the association's efforts, according to Robison, was nothing less than the French Revolution..."[42]

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[40] Webster, op. cit., pp. 241-242.

[41] Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide*, London: Serif, 1996, p. 30.

[42] Ferguson, op. cit., p. 5.

3. THE DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN

On May 5, 1789 King Louis convened the Estates General - the first time it had been convened since 1614. His purpose was to solve the nation's financial crisis. However, the Estates did not give him any money, and insisted instead on issues of representation. A deadlock ensued. The revolution proper began on June 17, 1789, when the Third Estate – composed mainly of lawyers and businessmen, "men of action and men of affairs"[43] – separated from the Estates General (which thereafter ceased to exist) and gathered a so-called National Assembly, of which they declared: "To it, and it alone, belongs the right to interpret and express the general will of the nation. Between the throne and this Assembly there can exist no veto, no power of negation."[44]

This, writes Davies, "was the decisive break. Three days later, locked out of their usual hall, the deputies met on the adjacent tennis court, *le jeu de paume*, and swore an oath never to disband until France was given a Constitution. 'Tell your master,' thundered Count Mirabeau to the troops sent to disperse them, 'that we are here by the will of the people, and will not disperse before the threat of bayonets.'

"Pandemonium ensued. At court, the King's conciliatory ministers fell out with their more aggressive colleagues. On 11 July [the chief minister] Jacques Necker, who had received a rousing welcome at the opening of the Estates General, was dismissed. Paris exploded. A revolutionary headquarters coalesced round the Duc d'Orléans at the Palais Royal. The gardens of the Palais Royal became a notorious playground of free speech and free love. Sex shows sprang up alongside every sort of political harangue. 'The exile of Necker,' screamed the fiery orator Camille Desmoulins fearing reprisals, 'is the signal for another St. Bartholomew of patriots.' The royal garrison was won over. On the 13th a Committee of Public Safety was created, and 48,000 men were enrolled in a National Guard under General Lafayette. Bands of insurgents tore down the hated *barrières* or internal customs posts in the city, and ransacked the monastery of Saint-Lazare in the search for arms. On the 14th, after 30,000 muskets were removed from the Hôtel des Invalides, the royal fortress of the Bastille was besieged. There was a brief exchange of gunfire, after which the governor capitulated. The King had lost his capital."[45]

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[43] J.M. Thompson, *The French Revolution*, Oxford, 1947, pp. 26-27.

[44] M.J. Cohen and John Major, *History in Quotations,* London: Cassell, 2004, p. 516.

[45] Norman Davies, *Europe: A History,* London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 694. "A typical internee was the Marquis de Sade, who had been transferred to the madhouse of Charenton some ten days previously. When the Bastille's doors were thrown open on 14 July 1989, no more than seven prisoners emerged. Four of them were judicially convicted forgers. Two were lunatics, one of whom believed he was Julius Caesar, and they soon found themselves locked up again at Charenton. The seventh was the Comte de Solages, whose sexual depravity had so alarmed his family that they procured his incarceration" (Zamoyski, *Holy Madness,* p. 56).

Power appeared to have passed from the king to the National Assembly and the Third Estate; but already at this early stage of the revolution (as in February, 1917 in Russia), real power was neither with the king nor with any of the Estates, nor with the "people" in the sense of the nation, but with the people in the sense of the mob, making it an example of what Polybius called "ochlocracy", or mob-rule, the worst kind of people's power. Or rather, power rested not with the mob, but with those who incited and controlled the mob – if a mob can be said to be under control. But at this stage, as in several later stages, the mob was not under control. For on July 20 Arthur Young wrote: "I hear nothing of their [the Assembly's] moving from Versailles; if they stay there under the control of an armed mob, they must make a government that will please the mob; but they will, I suppose, be wise enough to move to some central town, Tours, Blois or Orléans, where their deliberations may be free. But the Parisian spirit of commotion spreads quickly..."

So quickly, in fact, that a year later Antoine, Comte de Rivarol could write: "Three million armed peasants, from one end of the kingdom to the other, stop travellers, check their papers, and bring the victims back to Paris; the town hall cannot protect them from the fury of the patriotic hangman; the National Assembly in raising Paris might well have been able to topple the throne, but it cannot save a single citizen. The time will come... when the National Assembly will say to the citizen army: 'You have saved me from authority, but who will save me from you?' When authority has been overthrown, its power passes inevitably to the lowest classes of society... Such is today the state of France and its capital."[46] I

It happened as the Princes of the Blood had prophesied to Louis XVI: "The French monarchy must decline into despotism or become a democracy - two opposite kinds of revolution, but both calamitous."[47]

The success of the Revolution was assured by the weakness of the King; for when "he who restrains" stops restraining, "then," as Dostoyevsky said, "everything is permitted". William Doyle writes: "News of the king's surrender to popular resistance broke all restraints. His acquiescence in the defeat of the privileged orders was taken as a signal for all his subjects to take their own measures against public enemies. The prolonged political crisis had spawned countless wild rumours of plots to thwart the patriotic cause by starving the people. Monastic and noble granaries, reputedly bulging with the proceeds of the previous season's rents, dues, and tithes, seemed obvious evidence of their owners' wicked intentions. Equally suspicious were urban merchants scouring country markets far beyond their usual circuits to provide bread for hungry townsmen. Besides, the roads were thronged with unprecedented numbers of men seeking work as a result of the slump. Farmers had good reason to dread the depredations of bands of travelling vagrants, and now took little persuading that the kingdom was alive with brigands in aristocratic pay. It was just a year since the notorious storms of July 1788, and as a promising harvest began to ripen country people were particularly nervous. All this produced the 'Great Fear', a massive panic that swept whole provinces in the last weeks of July and left only the most peripheral regions untouched. Peasants assembled, armed themselves, and prepared to fight off the ruthless hirelings of aristocracy. Seen from a distance, such armed bands were often taken for brigands themselves, and so the panic spread.

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[46] Young, in Jocelyn Hunt, *The French Revolution*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 25-26.

[47] Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 515.

"In many areas villagers did not wait for the marauders to arrive. Then it would be too late. They were determined to make sure of aristocratic defeat by striking pre-emptively. After all, they would only anticipating what the Assembly was bound to decree. As one country priest explained, 'When the inhabitants heard that everything was going to be different they began to refuse to pay both tithes and dues, considering themselves so permitted, they said, by the new law to come.'"[48]

On August 4, under pressure from the peasant revolt, the National or Constituent Assembly declared that it "abolishes the feudal system in its entirety". It also proclaimed "King Louis XVI Restorer of French Liberty"...

In his pamphlet *What is the Third Estate?* published in that year, Abbé Sieyès asked: What is the Third Estate? Everything. What has it been in the political order up to the present? Nothing. What does it demand? To become something..."

Now, after August 4, the Third Estate *was* something. Rarely, if ever, in political history has a single act had such a huge and immediate effect (the abdication of the Tsar in February, 1917 is perhaps the only parallel).

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On August 26, the Assembly passed the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen,* which listed the following "natural, inalienable and sacred rights":

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[48] Doyle, op. cit., pp. 114-115.

"'I. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights. Social distinctions can only be founded on public utility.

'II. The purpose of every political association is the preservation of the natural and unprescriptible rights of men. These rights are liberty, property, and safety from, and resistance to, oppression.

'III. The principle of all sovereignty lies in the nation. No body of men, and no individual, can exercise authority which does not emanate directly therefrom.

'IV. Liberty consists in the ability to do anything which does not harm others.

'V. The Law can only forbid actions which are injurious to society…

'VI. The Law is the expression of the General Will… It should be the same for all, whether to protect or to punish.

'VII. No man can be accused, arrested, or detained except in those instances which are determined by law.

'VIII. The Law should only establish punishments which are strictly necessary. No person should be punished by retrospective legislation.

'IX. No man [is] presumed innocent till found guilty…

'X. No person should be troubled for his opinions, even religious ones, so long as their manifestation does not threaten public order.

'XI. The free communication of thoughts and opinions is one of men's most precious rights. Every citizen, therefore, can write, speak, and publish freely, saving only the need to account for abuses defined by law.

'XII. A public force is required to guarantee the [above] rights. It is instituted for the benefit of all, not for the use of those to whom it is entrusted.

'XIII. Public taxation is indispensable for the upkeep of the forces and the administration. It should be divided among all citizens without distinction, according to their abilities.

'XIV. Citizens… have the right to approve the purposes, levels, and extent of taxation.

'XV. Society has the right to hold every public servant to account.

'XVI. Any society in which rights are not guaranteed nor powers separated does not have a constitution.

'XVII. Property being a sacred and inviolable right, no person can be deprived of it, except by public necessity, legal process, and just compensation.'

The neglect of women in the *Declaration*, pointed out by Condorcet, was soon rectified. Thus in 1791 Olympe de Gouges wrote *The Rights of Women and the Citizen,* in which she declared: "1. Woman is born free, and remains equal to Man in rights… 4. The exercise of Woman's natural rights has no limit other than the tyranny of Man's opposing them… 17. Property is shared or divided equally by both sexes."[49]

"In due course the original Declaration was joined by new ideas, notably about human rights in the social and economic sphere. Article XXI of the revised Declaration of June 1793 stated: 'Public assistance is a sacred obligation [*dette].* Society owes subsistence to unfortunate citizens, whether in finding work for them, or in assuring the means of survival of those incapable of working.' Slavery was outlawed in 1794. Religious toleration was guaranteed."[50]

Pope Pius VI condemned the Declaration of Human Rights. In particular he condemned the idea of "absolute liberty", a liberty "which not only assures people of the right not to be disturbed about their religious opinions but also gives them this license to think, write and even have printed with impunity all that the most unruly imagination can suggest about religion. It is a monstrous right…"

For God also has rights, said the Pope: "What is more contrary to the rights of the Creator God Who limited human freedom by prohibiting evil, than 'this liberty of thought and action which the National Assembly accords to man in society as an inalienable right of nature'?"

There were two innovations in this revolutionary philosophy. First, the source of authority in society was proclaimed to be neither God, nor any existing political authority, but "the nation". Hence nations were to be seen as free agents with rights, and the source of all particular rights in their own societies.

But what constituted the nation? The essence of the nation, and the source of its rights, was what Rousseau called "the General Will" – a very vague term which anybody could claim to represent. At the same time, this "nation" or "General Will" ascribed to itself the most complete power, so that "no body of men, and no individual, can exercise authority which does not emanate directly therefrom." This immediately destroyed the authority, not only of the king, but also of the Church – and indeed, of every other hierarchy. This deification of the Nation led directly to the nationalist nightmares that have plagued the world to this day.

For, as Metropolitan Anastasy (Gribanovsky) wrote: "The nation, this collective organism, is just as inclined to deify itself as the individual man. The madness of pride grows in this case in the same progression, as every passion becomes inflamed in society, being refracted in thousands and millions of souls…"[51]

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[49] Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 518.

[50] Davies, op. cit., pp. 713-714.

The second innovation was the concept of "rights" that are "unprescriptible" – that is, prescribed neither by God nor by man. The question that immediately arose was: Where do they come from then? Man, according to the Declaration, has the unprescriptible "right" to do anything he likes – providing he doesn't harm others (article 4).

However, this latter qualification was not elaborated on, and was in practice ignored completely in the French revolutionary tradition. Thus a man was in principle free to do anything whatsoever. The only limitation on his freedom, according to later liberal theory, was other men's freedom: their right not to be harmed by him…

The development of the philosophy of human rights still had a long way to go. But its essence was already discernible in the French Declaration of 1789.

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In October a great crowd of hungry women brought the king from Versailles to Paris. Thereafter the forging of a new Constitution that would include limited powers for the king went ahead relatively peacefully. However, the king could not make up his mind whether to accept or reject the Revolution[52]; and this vacillation, combined with his arrest at Varennes on June 21, 1791 while attempting to flee the country, gradually undermined what remained of his authority.[53] For, as Hobsbawn points out, "traditional kings who abandon their peoples lose the right to royalty".[54]

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[51] Gribanovsky, *Besedy so sobstvennym svoim serdtsem* (Conversations with my own heart), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1964.

[52] Rejection was probably his more constant and sincere opinion. In October, 1789 he wrote to the Spanish King, his cousin, protesting "against all the decrees contrary to royal authority to which I have been compelled by force to assent, since 15th July of this year. I beg your Majesty to keep my protest secret until its publication becomes necessary" (Mark Almond, *Revolution*, London: De Agostini Editions, 1996, p. 74). See also Munro Price, "Countering the Revolution", *BBC History Magazine,* vol. 3, N 7, July, 2002, pp. 18-20.

[53] The day before his attempted escape the king declared: "What remains to the King other than a vain semblance of royalty?... The King does not think it possible to govern a kingdom of such great extent and importance as France through the means established by the National Assembly... The spirit of the clubs dominates everything... In view of all these facts, and the impossibility of the King's being able to do the good and prevent the evil which is being committed, is it surprising that the King has sought to recover his liberty and find security for himself and his family?" (Hunt, op. cit., p. 41).

[54] Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 86. Here Tsar Nicholas II provides a sharp contrast. He neither tried to flee his country, as did Louis, nor did he make the slightest concession to revolutionary ideology.

Meanwhile, while the Assembly passed a large number of laws, it completely failed to solve the problems that had propelled it to power - the financial insolvency of the country. It simply printed money that rapidly deteriorated in value, fuelling inflation, and in 1791 collected only 249 livres in taxes against 822.7 livres expended.[55]

In spite of these problems, the first anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, witnessed an extraordinary celebration of the revolution in which even the king took part. As Zamoyski writes: "It was to be a kind of Rousseauist troth-pledging, at which the nation would come together and symbolically constitute itself as a body, simultaneously paying homage to itself as such – the first of many acts of political onanism. Bailly [the mayor of Paris] suggested that the solemnity should take the form of a 'National Federation', with delegations from every corner of France meeting in Paris while those from surrounding villages congregated in every provincial town. Lafayette steered the whole exercise into the military sphere, substituting companies of National Guards from every part of the country for civilian delegates.

"The capital was to be decked out in a fitting manner to greet those making their long pilgrimage. Half the population of Paris spent three days in the pouring rain putting up triumphant arches and decorations. The Champ-de-Mars was transformed into a vast elliptical arena surrounded by grass banks on which seats were erected for spectators. At the end nearest the École Militaire there was a stand draped in the tricolor for the members of the Assembly and important guests. At the opposite end, nearest the River Seine, was the entrance, through a triple triumphal arch in the Roman style. Between the two stood a podium with a throne for the king and seats for the royal family, and, towering above everything else, a great square plinth with steps on all four sides, on which stood an altar.

"The morning of 14 July was wetter than ever, and the feet of the 300,000 Parisians soon turned the Champ-de-Mars into a quagmire. This did not make the event any easier to manage, but good humour triumphed. As they waited in the rain, people made jokes about being baptized in the national rain, and groups from different parts of the country showed off regional dances to each other.

"The king and queen arrived at noon, but it took a long time for them to be settled into their stand. Then came a march-past by 50,000 National Guards. It was not until four in the afternoon that the Bishop of Autun, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, attended by four hundred priests wearing the tricolor, began to celebrate mass. The altar at which he officiated was not a traditional liturgical *mensa*, but a circular neoclassical affair redolent of burnt offerings in ancient Rome. It was not the altar of God, on which sacrifice was offered up to the Almighty, it was the *autel de la patrie*, on which citizens pledged their devotion to the motherland.

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[55] Hunt, op. cit., p. 34.

"Lafayette was much in evidence all day on his white charger, and when the mass was over, he took centre stage. As if by a miracle, the weather cleared and the sun came out, bathing the whole scene in a soft luminous aura. While trumpets blared, Lafayette ascended the steps of the altar. As he began to swear loyalty to the king, the nation and the law, he drew his sword with a flourish and laid it on the altar. Fifty thousand National Guardsmen then repeated the same oath, followed by the king. Next came the singing of the *Te Deum* specially composed by François Gossec, during which people of all stations embraced tearfully in a hundred thousand acts of national fraternity. Lafayette was carried by the crowd to his white horse, on which he majestically left the field, with people kissing his hands and his clothes...

"The Fête de la Fédération represented a reconciliation of all the people living in France, and their betrothal as one nation. It mimicked Rousseau's vision of the Corsicans coming together to found their nation through a common pledge. The festival was also a recognition that the Marquis de Lafayette and the humblest peasant in France were brothers, both as members of a biological family and through the ideological kinship represented by the oath. At the same time, the celebration exposed a new reality. It showed how far the concept of nationhood had altered from the Enlightenment vision of a congeries living in consensus to something far more metaphysical and inherently divine..."[56]

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[56] Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 60-62.

4. THE BRITISH AND THE REVOLUTION

The ideas of the French revolution were infectious: Belgium and Switzerland were soon infected and became republics with French support. The Prussians and Austrians were very worried. So were the British. Although they prided themselves on being the home of liberty, the British saw that French revolutionary "liberty" would speedily destroy their own. Already the American revolution had shown that libertarianism and empire made an uncomfortable fit; and the fit would look still worse in India and Ireland as the French ideas filtered through to the subject peoples there.

Moreover, the first effects of the industrial revolution on the industrial poor, and of the "dark, satanic mills" of England's "green and pleasant land", threatened to arouse revolutionary passions among them. "'Two causes, and only two, will rouse a peasantry to rebellion,' opined Robert Southey, a radical turned Tory: 'intolerable oppression, or religious zeal'. But that moderately comforting scenario no longer applied: 'A manufacturing poor is more easily instigated to revolt: they have no local attachments… they know enough of what is passing in the political world to think themselves politicians'. England's rulers must pay heed: 'If the manufacturing system continues to be extended, I believe that revolution inevitably must come, and in its most fearful shape'."[57]

Already during the years of the American revolution, 1778-83, a debate had begun on whether the liberal ideas of John Locke that had inspired that revolution, had been right after all. In 1783 the Baptist Noel Turner wondered whether the "present national propensity" was the deployment of Locke on behalf of the "many-headed majesty" of "king-people". And in the same year Josiah Tucker published his "On the Evil Consequences Arising from the Propagation of Locke's Democratic Principles".

Tucker's disciple Soame Jenyns refuted the Lockean philosophy of the Whigs:

I controvert these five positions
Which Whigs pretend are the conditions
Of civil rule and liberty;
That men are equal born – and free –
That kings derive their lawful sway
All from the people's yea and nay –
That compact is the only ground,
On which a prince his rights can found –
Lastly, I scout that idle notion,
That government is put in motion,
And stopt again, like clock or chime,

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[57] Roy Porter, *Enlightenment,* London: Penguin books, 2000, p. 451.

Just as we want them to keep time.[58]

That said, when the first, Lockean phase of the French revolution broke out in 1789, it was generally accepted by men across the whole political spectrum, from the Prime Minister William Pitt the Younger to the leader of the Whigs, Charles Fox, who exclaimed: "How much the greatest event it is that ever happened in the world! And how much the best!"

Dissenters and poets were especially enthusiastic. William Wordsworth wrote:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven!

And "a Unitarian student at Cambridge, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, burned 'Liberty' and 'Equality' with gunpowder onto the velvety lawns of St. John's and Trinity. Dissenting intellectuals scrutinized political events for their prophetic meaning, with 'the Declaration of the Rights of Man in one hand, and the Book of Revelation in the other,' as Joseph Priestly put it."[59]

David Cannadine writes: "Thomas Paine, who had earlier gone to the American colonies to support their revolution, published *The Rights of Man* (1791), calling for the British to abolish monarchy, aristocracy and the House of Lords, urging that a republic was the best form of government, and that all men should be given the vote. Mary Wollstonecraft went further: for not only did she defend the French Revolution in *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), but she also advocated political equality for her gender in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).[60] At the same time, new, radical political societies, claiming thousands of members, and involving skilled working men in large numbers for the first time, sprang up in towns and cities across Britain, embracing Paine's subversive doctrines and corresponding with similar organizations in France. They were viewed with deep suspicion and distrust by the government, and such anxieties seemed amply borne out when in 1792 the French envoy to London, Chauvelin, ostentatiously received deputations from the Norwich Revolutionary Society, the Manchester Constitutional Society and the London Corresponding Society. In the summer and early autumn of 1795 protesters smashed the windows of Pitt's residence at 10 Downing Street, a crowd of about 200,000 people hurled abuse at the premier and his sovereign as they rode to the opening of parliament, and radical activists were organizing monster meetings across the country. The second half of the decade was even worse, characterized by steeply rising food prices and high unemployment, which reached a crisis point in 1800. There had been a succession of very poor harvests, and there were many rumours and fears that there would be armed insurrections, and that Britain would soon be facing its own revolution.

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[58] Mark Goldie, "John Locke: Icon of Liberty", *History Today,* October, 2004, pp. 35, 36.

[59] Robert Tombs, *The English and Their History,* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, p. 384.

[60] In which she denied that there were any specifically feminine qualities: "I here throw down my gauntlet, and deny the existence of sexual virtues, not excepting modesty" (in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 483). In spite of rejecting marriage as a form of legalized prostitution, this proto-feminist married the British anarchist, William Godwin, by whom she had a daughter, Mary, who married the famous poet Shelley and became the author of *Frankenstein…* (V.M.)

"This domestic subversion seemed all the more sinister and ominous to the authorities because in February 1793 France had declared war on royal Britain, and these anxieties were further reinforced when the revolution lurched savagely towards destructive authoritarianism, as Robespierre's 'Reign of Terror' began later in the year, and 16,000 French men and women were eventually sent to the guillotine. To be sure, France had long been Britain's 'traditional' enemy, and the sequence of conflicts that had begun in the late seventeenth century, initially fought between William III and Louis XIV, amounted to what was in effect a 'second Hundred Years War' between the two cross-Channel countries. Moreover, France had joined in the American War of Independence on the side of the colonists, and it had thereby obtained revenge for the defeats that Pitt the Elder had inflicted during the Seven Years' War. But revolutionary France was a different nation from royal France, and it was widely believed during the remainder of the 1790s that it sought to invade and defeat Britain, and also to subvert the established the social and political order from within – and not only in Britain but in Ireland as well. The war that began in 1793 was thus not only a conflict of arms, but also of ideology, and the British authorities feared that the two would converge, as sedition and subversion spread to the Royal Navy, which was Britain's final bulwark against invasion. They duly came together in 1797, when there were mutinies in the Channel fleet anchored at Spithead off Portsmouth and at the Nore at the mouth of the Thames, and there were further disruptions within British squadrons in the West Indies and the Cape of Good Hope, and in the fleet commanded by Sir John Jervis off the coast of Spain. All were brutally suppressed. But this brought little respite, for later in the same year, the young Napoleon Bonaparte was put in charge of the ominously named 'Army of England'. It was located along the French coast a serious prospect of invasion and conquest by a continental enemy power.

"Pitt responded to these increasing threats and challenges by building up a network of spies and informants (who may have exaggerated the potential dangers and threats to order) and by passing a series of repressive measures and instituting a succession of harsh prosecutions that were denounced by their victims as ushering in Britain's own 'Reign of Terror' (though it was scarcely comparable to what was happening in France). In 1794 his government suspended habeas corpus, which had guaranteed to all Britons that they would not be imprisoned without trial, and soon after, the leaders of the London Corresponding Society, the largest of the new, radical organizations, were charged with treason on the grounds that their plan to hold a convention to demand universal male suffrage was tantamount to sedition. But they were acquitted by an independent-minded London jury, and to widespread popular delight. Pitt retaliated by passing two further repressive measures in the following year: the Treasonable Practices Act declared it unlawful to 'imagine, devise or intend' the death or destruction of the monarch, while the Seditious Meetings Act limited the size of public gatherings to no more than fifty people. But popular protests continued across the country, and members of the corresponding societies continued to meet, to which the government responded by passing the Combination Acts of 1799 and 1800, which effectively made any form of association illegal, whether for political purposes or in pursuit of improved pay and conditions of work. The Britain of the late 1790s was thus a nation ill at ease with itself, and whereas Pitt's repressive policies seemed to his supporters necessary to maintain order, they appeared to his critics excessive and paranoid. Either way, it was against this uncertain, febrile and anxious background that Pitt passed the Act of Union incorporating Ireland into the United Kingdom…"[61]

However, as the news of the first atrocities filtered across the Channel, the revolutionary mood abated. In 1798 Coleridge repented of his previous enthusiasm:

When France in wrath her giant-limbs upreared
And with that oath, which smote air, earth and sea,
Stamped her strong foot, and said she would be free,
Bear witness for me, how I hoped and feared!...
Forgive me, Freedom! O forgive those dreams!

The earlier debate on Locke – the acknowledged ideologue of the first phase of the French revolution – was now renewed. Could the ideas of the urbane and civilized Locke really have led to such barbarism? William Jones thought so. He said that "with Mr. Locke in his hand", that "mischievous infidel Voltaire" had set about destroying Christianity. And Locke was "the oracle of those who began and conducted the American Revolution, which led to the French Revolution; which will lead (unless God in his mercy interfere) to the total overthrow of religion and government in this kingdom, perhaps in the whole Christian world."[62]

The most famous debate that took place in England over the revolution was between two men who had been on the same, liberal side during the American Revolution, but now found themselves on opposing sides. Thomas Paine had displayed his radical credentials and oratorical skill in the famous anti-monarchist tract *Common Sense* (1776), and now enthusiastically backed his revolutionary colleagues in France, who read his tracts in the National Assembly. His opponent was the Anglo-Irish thinker and Whig parliamentarian Edmund Burke, who could hardly be accused of being an enemy of freedom, for he had defended the freedom of both America and Ireland.[63]

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[61] Cannadine, *Victorious Century. The United Kingdom, 1800-1906*, London: Viking, 2017, pp. 13-15.

[62] Goldie, op. cit., p. 36.

[63] Witness his famous remark: "Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together" (Cohen and Major, *History in Quotations*, p. 503).

In his *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), written just one year after the Declaration of the Rights of Man appeared, and well before the atrocities of the Jacobin period, Burke prophetically attacked the liberal doctrine of universal rights as being precisely the cause of the greatest tyranny. Burke, write Ofir Haivry and Yoram Hazony, endorses "Selden's argument that universal rights, since they are based only on reason rather than 'positive, recorded, hereditary title,' can be said to give everyone a claim to absolutely anything. Adopting a political theory based on such universal rights has one obvious meaning: that the 'sure inheritance' of one's nation will immediately be 'scrambled for and torn to pieces' by 'every wild litigious spirit' who knows how to use universal rights to make ever new demands.

"Burke's argument is frequently quoted today by conservatives who assume that his target was Rousseau and his followers in France. But Burke's attack was not primarily aimed at Rousseau, who had few enthusiasts in Britain or America at the time. The actual target of his attack was contemporary followers of Grotius and Locke - individuals such as Richard Price, Joseph Priestley, Charles James Fox, Charles Grey, Thomas Paine, and Thomas Jefferson. Price, who was the explicit subject of Burke's attack in the first pages of *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* had opened his *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty* (1776) with the assertion that 'the principles on which I have argued form the foundation of every state as far as it is free; and are the same with those taught by Mr. Locke.' And much the same could be said of the others, all of whom followed Locke in claiming that the only true foundation for political and constitutional thought was precisely in those 'general theories concerning the rights of men' that Burke believed would bring turmoil and death to one country after another.

"The carnage taking place in France triggered a furious debate in England. It pitted supporters of the conservatism of Coke and Selden (both Whigs and Tories) against admirers of Locke's universal rights theories (the so-called New Whigs). The conservatives insisted that these theories would uproot every traditional political and religious institution in England, just as they were doing in France. It is against the backdrop of this debate that Burke reportedly stated in Parliament that, of all the books ever written, [Locke's] *Second Treatise* was 'one of the worst.'"[64]

According to David Starkey, "Burke… correctly identified from the beginning that the operating principle of the Revolution was inhuman, abstract Reason, which thought it could and should remodel politics, society and humanity itself from scratch. This leveling Reason saw history, habit and tradition as mere obstacles to progress that like any human opposition were to be destroyed by the joyous, all-consuming bonfire of the vanities; 'The Year One' of human history.

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[64] Haivry and Hazony, "What is Conservatism?", *American Affairs,* Summer, 2017, vol. I, no. 2.

"For Burke, on the other hand, history and tradition were the foundation of civilization and habit – the things that made us human. From time to time, they might need reform. But reform should preserve, not destroy, their essence. Monarchy, as the supreme embodiment of history and tradition, thus became a test case. Was it the key obstacle to the new world, as the French quickly came to see? Or was it the guarantor of stability and freedom, as the British had decided (on Burke's reading) in 1689, and would again, Burke predicted, once more?"[65]

Burke foresaw that the revolution would bring in its train, not freedom, but tyranny. And "the tyranny of a multitude is a multiplied tyranny".[66] Liberal constitutionalism was "the third option", in Burke's opinion, the golden mean between the "despotism of the monarch" and the "despotism of the multitude".

Burke accepted Barruel's theory that the revolution was led by *Illuminati* conspirators. Its result would be: "laws overturned; tribunals subverted; industry without vigour; commerce expiring; the revenue unpaid, yet the people impoverished; a church pillaged, and a state not relieved; civil and military anarchy made the constitution of the kingdom; every thing human and divine sacrificed to the idol of the public credit, and national bankruptcy the consequence."[67] The main problem with radical revolutionaries was that they did not take human nature into account. They "are so taken up with their theories about the rights of man, that they have totally forgotten his nature."

"There is something *satanic* about the French Revolution that distinguishes it from everything we have known, and perhaps from everything we will ever witness," wrote Joseph de Maistre, whose *Considérations sur la France*, published in London in 1797, painted a blood-drenched picture of events. Burke agreed: "We cannot, if we would, delude ourselves about the true state of this dreadful contest. *It is a religious war.* It includes in its object undoubtedly every other interest of society as well as this; but this is the principal and leading feature. It is through this destruction of religion that our enemies propose the accomplishment of all their other views. The French Revolution, impious at once and fanatical, had no other plan for domestick power and foreign empire. Look at all the proceedings of the National Assembly from the first day of declaring itself such in the year 1789, to this very hour, and you will find full half of their business to be directly on this subject. In fact it is the spirit of the whole. The religious system, called the Constitutional Church, was on the face of the whole proceeding set up only as a mere temporary amusement to the people, and so constantly stated in all their conversations, till the time should come, when they might with safety cast off the very appearance of all religion whatsoever, and persecute Christianity throughout Europe with fire and sword. This religious war is not a controversy between sect and sect as formerly, but a war against all sects and all religions."[68]

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[65] Starkey, *Crown & Country,* London: Harper Press, 2011, pp. 442-443.

[66] Burke, *Letter to a Member of the National Assembly* (1791).

[67] Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

So the real question that the Revolution sought to answer was not political or economic, but theological or ideological, not: who pays the taxes? but: who rules the universe? Is it the God-Man, Jesus Christ, or the man-god, humanity or the nation, what Noel Turner called the "many-headed majesty" of "king-people"? The *ancien regime* declared the first; the revolution – the second.

King Louis XVI had stated the Christian principle: "I have taken the firm and sincere decision to remain loftily, publicly and generously faithful to Him Who holds in His hand kings and kingdoms. I can only be great through Him, because in Him alone is greatness, glory, majesty and power; and because I am destined one day to be his living image on earth."[69] This firm, but humble statement of the doctrine, not so much of the Divine *right* of kings, as of their Divine *dependence* on the King of kings, was opposed by the satanic pride of the revolution. For, as Desmoulins declared: "The Revolution… claims to found society on the will of man instead of founding it on the will of God, which puts the sovereignty of human reason in the place of the Divine law."[70]

In England, the friends and enemies of the revolution were similarly divided over religion. Thus "William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1794) mounted a poetic protest against what seemed to him the 'mind-forg'd manacles' of repressive religion, and such industrial abuses as child labour. Between 1794 and 1807, Paine produced instalments of a further polemic entitled *The Age of* Reason, which assailed established religion for its irrational doctrines and as the handmaid of state power, denounced church corruption, contested the legitimacy and authority of the Bible, and argued for the superiority of reason over revelation."

However, on the other side "the Anglican clergyman William Paley, in *Reasons for Contentment* (1792), urged that the 'labouring part of the British people' should be grateful for the lot to which providence had assigned them, and accept and appreciate the time-honoured and traditional social hierarchy and their own place and station within it. Hannah More made essentially the same point in her *Cheap Repository of Moral and Religious Tracts*, which were printed in their millions between 1795 and 1810, and which advocated the causes of purity, discipline, submissiveness, civility and patriotism, especially for the working classes, and even more so for those not in work. So did William Wilberforce in his *Practical View of the Prevailing Religious System of Professed Christians* (1797), in which he deplored the merely nominal religiosity of most

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[68] Burke, *Remarks on the Policy of the Allies* (1793), in David P. Fidler and Jennifer M. Welsh (eds.), *Empire and Community: Edmund Burke's Writings and Speeches on International Relations*, Oxford: Westview Press, 1999, p. 280.

[69] Louis XVI, in *Foi Transmise et Sainte Tradition* (Transmitted Faith and Holy Tradition), N 68, January, 1993, p. 13.

[70] Desmoulins, in M.V. Zyzykin, *Patriarkh Nikon*, Warsaw: Synodal Press, part III, 1931, p. 238.

Britons, recounted his own spiritual journey through which he found Christ, an also challenged men and women to centre their own lives on Jesus, so that the spiritual boundaries of society might be restored and strengthened. Two years earlier, Wilberforce had supported the Younger Pitt in his suspension of habeas corpus, and like More, he was a determined upholder of the established order of church and king. Both were concerned with preserving the spiritual and moral foundations of British society against what they regarded as the subversive, poisonous and atheist doctrines emanating from France."[71]

Since the *ancien regime* and the revolution had such diametrically opposed views of the true foundation of society, it was inevitable, said Burke, that the latter would try and destroy the former: "No Monarchy, limited or unlimited, nor any of the old Republics, can possibly be safe as long as this strange, nameless, wild, enthusiastic thing [the revolution] is established in the Centre of Europe."

Bradley Birzer writes: "Burke asked exactly how one might categorize the revolutionary government. Is it a monarchy of the democracy, a democracy of the monarchy, some form of pure democracy, or a nasty oligarchy? Whatever it claims to be, Burke continued, the intelligent person can simply dismiss that label as a manifestation of, at best, poor thinking, and, at worst, malicious and willful falsehood. Certainly, the revolutionary government and society had veered far away from the course of nature, creating nothing but a mere contrivance and shadow of reality.

"The Anglo-Irish statesman and philosopher noted that it is worth considering the notion that Revolutionary France is a modern attempt at democracy. Drawing explicitly upon the writings of Aristotle, Burke asked what the real difference was between a monarchy and a democracy: 'Of this I am certain, that in a democracy, the majority of its citizens is capable of exercising the most cruel oppressions upon the minority, whenever strong divisions prevail in that kind of policy, as they often must.' However constituted, few forms of government are more oppressive than a democracy armed with self-righteous fury at all who oppose the will of the majority.

"In his own analysis written at the very beginning of the revolution, Burke followed Plato and anticipated… Alexis de Tocqueville.

"Because the king is only one man, several things will restrain him (relatively speaking, of course, for a monarch can easily go bad). First, by tradition, he will recognize that while he might have mastery over things temporal, he cannot fully control things spiritual. Second, by being one person, he cannot extend his imagination beyond his own ego, thus having the limitations of his own mind and his own experience. None of this is to suggest that a king cannot be ruthless, brutal, and ferocious. Of course, he can, as Burke well understood. After all,

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[71] Cannadine, *Victorious Century,* pp. 41-42.

Burke had just spent a considerable amount of time writing and speaking on the evils and follies of Henry VIII. Still, no matter how far the king goes in each of these things, he will encounter limits. For the 'hive' that is the democratic mindset, however, the very spirit of democracy pushes its adherents to surmount such limits, and to behave as one man with the will of a god. The very animalistic thought process of the collective lends it toward a righteous stand against any opposition, internally or externally. When opposed, they react with 'fury'…

"Armed with the insane fury of the democratic will, the revolutionaries believe themselves pure enough to pass absolutist judgments against the corrupt. While the corrupt might be only eighty to ninety percent corrupted, it is easiest for the presumed pure to claim it totally corrupt, destroy it utterly, and begin anew. There is no cost to claiming the need to begin anew because there yet exists no basis by which to judge that which has yet to come. As that which has yet to come does not exist—except in the hearts of men—it therefore has no weight or substance. By definition, that which has yet to come must be perfect, as it exists only in our perfect thought and hopes, not in reality. How then, can one ever compare that which is unreal but perfect with that very real thing which, by its very existence in a fallen world, must be imperfect? Wisdom would and should allow us to realize this, but democratic fury and passion dismiss such reason as doubtful, traitorous, and, perhaps, insane.

"Listening to its opponents, one might think the French monarchy akin to the bloodthirsty god-kings of the ancient Orient or, perhaps, to Satan himself (though many of the revolutionaries, of course, did not believe in such 'superstitions' as God and the Devil). In the descriptions of the contemporary French monarchy, one might envision a world at constant war, ignorant of all arts and sciences, devoid of any economic securities—in manufacturing and agriculture—and 'where the human race itself melts away and perishes under the eye of the observer.'

"Though not a proponent of the monarchy, Burke could not in good conscience look away from the goodness—however limited—to be found in much of France's religion, laws, manners, and opinions. Could not some corrective to the corruption of the monarchy be found in these? Why did men fail to see the good and focus only on the evil?

"What sort of madness had gripped the revolutionaries? The madness of democracy and its arrogant totalitarianism."[72]

"Burke," writes Tombs, "was angry that revolution was being treated as 'a spectator sport for middle-class intellectuals, tempted to believe that they can proclaim governments illegitimate without anyone getting hurt' – anyone who mattered, anyway. He insisted that 1688 had not tried to invent an ideal system from scratch – the dangerous French error. Every political community was slowly shaped by 'the wisdom of unlettered men', in a permanent 'partnership' of the living, the dead and the yet unborn. A free society relied on voluntary respect for its institutions, which 'the longer they have lasted… the more we cherished them.' He insisted that revolution entailed suffering and loss, and was 'the very last resource of the thinking and the good… I cannot conceive how any man can have brought himself to that pitch of presumption to consider his country as nothing but *carte blanche*, upon which he may scribble whatever he pleases.' Burke's position was historical and philosophical, not religious, unlike that of his opponents, whom he considered Puritan 'bigots'. Many were shocked that Burke, a leading Whig intellectual, supporter of American rights and religious tolerance, and nemesis of the East India Company, should attack the French Revolution. But his ideas were consistent. He had long dismissed abstract theory – 'the fairy hand of philosophy' – as the basis for social organization. Societies, he believed, grew organically, including by 'sympathy' and 'imagination'. He denounced usurpations in which greed and intellectual arrogance (by people who 'have no respect for the wisdom of others; but… a very full measure of confidence in their own') destroyed legitimate authorities, ancient rights, social relationships, and laws embodying the history and culture of unique societies. Hence he regarded oppression by the British in India and Ireland (he was a Dubliner) and oppression by the revolutionary authorities in France as morally identical. 'I do not like to see any thing destroyed; any void produced in society; any ruin on the face of the land.'

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[72] Birzer, "Edmund Burke and the Totalitarianism of Democracy", *The Imaginative Conservative,* April 17, 2107, http://www.theimaginativeconservative.org/2017/04/edmund-burke-totalitarianism-democracy-bradley-birzer.html.

"*Reflections* met a chorus of denunciation. 'Cursed Stuff', exclaimed his old friend and ally Fox. Pitt thought it too extreme. Young idealists such as Coleridge, Wordsworth and Keats continued to admire the French Revolution as a revival of the 'Good Old Cause' of Sidney and 'others who called Milton friend'. Dozens of rebuttals were written, including by Priestley, the historian Catherine Macaulay, and Mary Wollstonecraft in her *Vindication of the Rights of Man* (1790) and *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), maintaining that 'God-given reason' was the only source of legitimate authority. By far the most widely read reply to what he called Burke's 'thundering attack' was Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1791), dedicated to George Washington. Paine's style was dogmatic reiteration. He did not engage with Burke's ideas, which he dismissed as foolish, incomprehensible ('all this jargon') or dishonest. His position was exactly what Burke rejected: judging political systems on ideological, not pragmatic grounds. The new French constitution was 'a rational order of things'; whereas the English system [much admired by many French liberals] was tainted by originating in conquest in 1066 by [William of Normandy] 'the son of a prostitute and the plunderer of the English nation', and it was stained by 'the filth of rotten boroughs', where 'every man has his price'. Monarchy ('the enemy of mankind'), a hereditary peerage and an established Church were the roots of evil. The remedy was simple: 'For a nation to be free, it is sufficient that she wills it.'

"… In June 1792, Paine was summoned for seditious libel, and escaped to Paris to sit in the National Assembly. But Burke's version of English history as a long collective 'partnership' was no less influential, endowing its institutions with a powerful legitimizing pedigree'."[73]

(Paine was soon cast into prison by the Jacobins and barely escaped the guillotine. None the wiser for his experience, he fled to America, where he died in poverty and unpopularity.)

Burke's emphasis on the importance of tradition was important at a time when the rage was all for the destruction of everything that was old and venerable. In this respect (although not in others) he went against one of the main presuppositions of Rousseau and the English social contract theorists, following rather in the line of thought of the German Counter-Enlightenment thinkers Hamann and Herder. "Society is indeed a contract," he wrote, "[but] becomes a partnership… between those who are living, those who are dead and those who are to be born."

As Sir Isaiah Berlin writes: "Burke's famous onslaughts on the principles of the French revolutionaries was founded upon the selfsame appeal to the myriad strands that bind human beings into a historically hallowed whole, contrasted with the utilitarian model of society as a trading-company held together by contractual obligations, the world of 'sophisters, oeconomists, and calculators' who are blind and deaf to the unanalysable relationships that make a family, a tribe, a nation, a movement, any association of human beings held together by something more than a quest for mutual advantage, or by force, or by anything that is not mutual love, loyalty, common history, emotion and outlook."[74]

Society exists over several generations, so why, asked Burke, should only one generation's interests be respected in the social contract? As Sir Roger Scruton writes, "the social contract prejudices the interests of those who are not alive to take part in it: the dead and the unborn. Yet they too have a claim, maybe an indefinite claim, on the resources and institutions over which the living so selfishly contend. To imagine society as a contract among its living members, is to offer no rights to those who go before and after. But when we neglect those absent souls, we neglect everything that endows law with its authority, and which guarantees our own survival. We should therefore see the social order as a partnership, in which the dead and the unborn are included with the living."[75]

"Every people," writes L.A. Tikhomirov, "is, first of all, a certain historical whole, a long row of consecutive generations, living over hundreds or thousands of years in a common life handed down by inheritance. In this form a people, a nation, is a certain socially organic phenomenon with more or less clearly expressed laws of inner development… But political intriguers and the democratic tendency does not look at a people in this form, as a historical, socially organic phenomenon, but simply in the form of a sum of *the individual inhabitants of the country*. This is the second point of view, which looks on a nation as a simple association of people united into a state because they wanted that, living according to laws which they like, and arbitrarily changing the laws of their life together when it occurs to them."[76]

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[73] Tombs, op. cit., pp. 385-386.

[74] Berlin, "The Counter-Enlightenment", in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, pp. 256-257.

[75] Scruton, *Modern Philosophy*, London: Arrow Books, 1997, p. 417.

Burke rejected the idea that the French Revolution was simply the English Revolution writ large. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 was not a revolution in the new, French sense, because it left English traditions, including English traditions of liberty, intact: it "was made to preserve our *ancient* indisputable laws and liberties, and that *ancient* constitution of government which is our only security for law and liberty… We wished at the period of the Revolution, and do now wish, to derive all we possess *as an inheritance from our forefathers*… All the reformations we have hitherto made, have proceeded upon the principle of reference to antiquity."[77] In fact, far from making the people the sovereign power, the English parliament in 1688 had sworn "in the name of the people" to "most humbly and faithfully submit themselves, their heirs and posterities" to the Monarchs William and Mary "for ever".

The French Revolution, by contrast, rejected all tradition. "You had," he told the French, "the elements of a constitution very nearly as good as could be wished…; but you chose to act as if you have never been moulded into civil society, and had everything to begin anew. You began ill, because you began by despising everything that belonged to you." "Your constitution, it is true,… suffered waste and dilapidation; but you possessed in some parts the walls and, in all, the foundations of a noble and venerable castle. You might have repaired those walls; you might have built on those old foundations. Your constitution was suspended before it was perfected." "Rage and frenzy will pull down more in half an hour, than prudence, deliberation, and foresight can build up in an hundred years."[78] The French Revolution was just another disaster "brought upon the world by pride, ambition, avarice, revenge, lust, sedition, hypocrisy, ungoverned zeal". The "rights of man" were just a "pretext" invented by the "wickedness" of human nature.[79]

"It was Burke's *Reflections*," writes G.P. Gooch, "which overthrew the supremacy of Locke [for the time being], and formed the starting-point of a number of schools of thought, agreeing in the rejection of the individualistic rationalism which had dominated the eighteenth century. The work is not only the greatest exposition of the philosophic basis of conservatism ever written, but a declaration of the principles of evolution, continuity, and solidarity, which must hold their place in all sound political thinking. Against the omnipotence of the individual, he sets the collective reason; against the claims of the present, he sets the accumulated experience of the past; for natural rights he offers social rights; for liberty he substitutes law. Society is a partnership between those who are living, those who are dead, and those who are yet to be born."[80]

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[76] Tikhomirov, "Demokratia liberal'naia i sotsial'naia" (Liberal and Social Democracy), in *Kritika Demokratii (A Critique of Democracy)*, Moscow: "Moskva", 1997, p. 122.

[77] Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

[78] Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

[79] Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

As William Doyle writes, Burke attributed the fall of the old order "to a conspiracy. On the one hand were the 'moneyed interests', resentful at their lack of esteem and greedy for new profits; on the other, and even more important, were the so-called philosophers of the Enlightenment, a 'literary cabal' committed to the destruction of Christianity by any and every available means. The idea of a philosophic conspiracy was not new. It went back to the only one ever conclusively proved to have existed, the plot of the self-styled Illuminati to undermine the Church-dominated government of Bavaria. The Bavarian government published a sensational collection of documents to illustrate its gravity, and Burke had read it. Although he was not the first to attribute events in France to conspiracy of the sort thwarted in Bavaria, the way he included the idea in the most comprehensive denunciation of the Revolution yet to appear lent it unprecedented authority. Nor was the destruction of Christianity and the triumph of atheism the only catastrophe he predicted. Disgusted by the way the 'Republic of Paris' and its 'swinish multitude' held the government captive, the provinces would eventually cut loose and France would fall apart. The assignats would drive out sound coinage and hasten, rather than avert, bankruptcy. The only possible end to France's self-induced anarchy would come when 'some popular general, who understand the art of conciliating the soldiery, and who possesses the true spirit of command, shall draw the eyes of all men upon himself. Armies will obey him on his personal account… the moment in which that event will happen, the person who really commands the army is your master.'"[81]

Thus did Burke, having already prophesied the Jacobin terror, foresee its sequel and consummation - the coming of Napoleon…

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[80] Gooch, "Europe and the French Revolution", in *The Cambridge Modern History,* Cambridge University Press, 1934, vol. VIII, p. 757.
[81] Doyle, op. cit., pp. 167-168.

5. THE JACOBIN TERROR

In June, 1791 Louis XVI tried, unsuccessfully, to flee abroad, and in August the monarchs of Austria and Prussia met at Pillnitz to co-ordinate action against the Revolution. Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden and Catherine of Russia also prepared to crush the "orang-outangs of Europe". From the summer of 1791 to the summer of 1792 power steadily slipped away from the elected Constituent Assembly, which was still broadly in favour of a constitutional monarchy, and into the hands of the mob, or the Paris Commune. Their passionate hatred of refractory priests and monarchists inside the country was inflamed by the first attempts of the foreign powers to invade France and restore legitimate authority from outside.

The rhetoric became increasingly bloody. On April 25, the "Marseillaise" was composed for the army of the Rhine; it spoke about "impure blood" drenching the tracks of the conquering French armies. On the same day the new invention of the Guillotine claimed its first victim... On June 20 the *sansculottes* ("without breeches"), invaded the Tuileries. "By sheer weight of numbers," writes Zamoyski, "the crowd pushed through the gates of the royal palace and came face to face with Louis XVI in one of the upstairs salons, where the defenceless monarch had to endure the abuse of the mob. Pistols and drawn sabres were waved in his face, and he was threatened with death. More significantly, he was made to don a red cap [symbol of the revolution] and drink the health of the nation - and thereby to acknowledge its sovereignty. By acquiescing, he toasted himself off the throne."[82]

> For a brief moment, on July 14, the third anniversary of the storming of the Bastille, it looked as if constitutional monarchy could be saved. Louis was called "king of the French" and "father of his country". But on the same day Marie Antoinette's nephew, Francis II, was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in Frankfurt in a ceremony that reaffirmed with great splendour the monarchical principle. Between the French revolution and the German monarchy there could be no compromise: the centre, constitutionalism, could not hold...
>
> Pressure mounted on the Assembly to declare the dethronement of the king. Finally, on August 10, the Tuileries was again invaded, 600 Swiss guards were brutally massacred, and the king and his family was imprisoned in the Temple. The Assembly "had little alternative but to 'invite' the French people to form a convention 'to assure the sovereignty of the people and the reign of liberty and equality. The next day it decreed that the new assembly was to be elected by manhood suffrage, without distinction between citizens. Only servants and the unemployed had no vote."[83]

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[82] Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

[83] Doyle, op. cit., p. 193.

Paris was ruled by the mob now. In the first week of September 1792 there took place "the September Massacres – perhaps the ugliest chapter of the whole history of the Revolution... These were based on fears that the Duke of Brunswick, who was believed to be advancing on Paris at the head of the Prussian army, would on his arrival free all the inmates of the city's prisons, who would at once rally to his support. The radicals, and particularly the extremist journalist Jean-Paul Marat, called for pre-emptive action, demanding that all the prisoners in the city should be slaughtered at once. Men of the National Guard, and others from the *fédérés* set to with a will; by 6 September half the prison population – 1,400 to 1,500 – had been killed. Well over two hundred of them were Catholic priests, whose only crime had been to submit to the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Nor were these straight, clean killings; those responsible soon became no better than homicidal lunatics, torturing, amputating, eviscerating their victims in an orgy of bloodlust. Few of these unfortunates suffered more than the queen's greatest friend, the Princesse de Lambelle. She was stripped, raped and savagely mutilated; her heart roasted and eaten, and her head, impaled on another pike, paraded beneath the queen's window at the Temple."[84]

On September 20 the Prussian army was turned back – more precisely, betrayed - at Valmy. It is difficult to say that it was defeated when there were only 160 German casualties to the French army's 300. Rather, the leader of the Prussian army, the Duke of Brunswick, who also happened to be the leader of German Masonry, quite clearly betrayed his country and an overwhelmingly superior position in order to let the forces of the revolution win.[85]

On September 21 the Convention announced the abolition of the monarchy and on September - the beginning of Year One of the new republic.

It was at this point that the Jacobin dictatorship, which was much closer to Illuminism than conventional Masonry, simply cast the Masons aside, even though several of the leading Jacobins were adepts. Thus Philippe d'Orléans, seeing the way the tide was moving against the order, renounced it - but this did not save him from the guillotine. "The brotherhoods were considered outposts of counter-revolution, many disbanded themselves, some members emigrated, others stopped all work. Only after the coming to power of Napoleon, who protected the order, was its activity renewed and even broadened."[86]

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[84] John Julius Norwich, *France. From Gaul to DeGaulle,* London: John Murray, 2019, p. 210.

[85] Tim Williamson, "Battle of Valmy", *All about History,* p. 59; L.A. Tikhomirov, *Religiozno-Filosofskie Osnovy Istorii* (The Religious-Philosophical Foundations of History), Moscow, 1997, pp. 460-461,

[86] O.F. Soloviev, *Masonstvo v Mirovoj Politike XX Veke* (Masonry in World Politics in the 20th Century), Moscow: Rosspen, 1998, p. 22. The Mason Christopher Hodapp writes: "It was rumoured for many years that Napoleon Bonaparte was a Freemason, but there is no historic proof of it. Still, many of his military officers, members of his Grand Council for the Empire, and 22 of the 30 Marshals of France were. So were his four brothers, three of whom were made kings by Napoleon. The Emperor's wife, Empress Josephine, was even admitted into a French female

The assembly was replaced by a National Convention, whose aim was to legislate for a new republican Constitution. It was divided between "Montagnards" (Jacobins) on the left, led by Marat, Danton, Desmoulins, Robespierre and the Parisian delegates, and the "Girondins" on the right, led by Brissot, Vergniaud and the "faction of the Gironde". The Montagnards were identified with the interests of the Paris mob and the most radical ideas of the Revolution; the Girondins – with the interests of the provinces and the original liberal ideals of 1789. The Montagnards stood for disposing of the king as soon as possible; the Girondins wanted a referendum of the whole people to decide.

The Montagnard Saint-Just said that a trial was unnecessary; the people had already judged the king on August 10; it remained only to punish him. For "there is no innocent reign… every King is a rebel and a usurper."[87] Robespierre had voted against the death penalty in the Assembly, but now he said that "Louis must die that the country may live". And he agreed with Saint-Just: "Louis cannot be judged, he has already been judged. He has been condemned, or else the Republic is not blameless. To suggest putting Louis XVI on trial, in whatever way, is a step back towards royal and constitutional despotism; it is a counter-revolutionary idea; because it puts the Revolution itself in the dock. After all, if Louis can still be put on trial, Louis can be acquitted; he might be innocent. Or rather, he is presumed to be until he is found guilty. But if Louis can be presumed innocent, what becomes of the Revolution?"[88]

There was a certain logic in these words: since the Revolution undermined all the foundations of the old regime, the possibility that the head of that regime might be innocent implied that the Revolution might be guilty. So "revolutionary justice" required straight execution rather than a trial; it could not afford to question the foundations of the Revolution itself. It was the same logic that led to the execution without trial of Tsar Nicholas II in 1918...

But the majority of the deputies were not yet as "advanced" in their thinking as Robespierre. So "during the third week of January 1793," writes Ridley, "the Convention voted four times on the issue. A resolution finding Louis guilty of treason, and rejecting the idea of an appeal to the people by a plebiscite, was carried by 426 votes to 278; the decision to impose the death penalty was carried by 387 to 314. Philippe Egalité [the Duke of Orléans and cousin of the king who became Grand Master of the Masons, then a Jacobin, renouncing his title for the name 'Philippe Egalité'] voted to convict Louis and for the death penalty. A deputy then proposed that the question of what to do with Louis should be

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lodge in 1804. Regardless of whether Napoleon was ever made a Mason, he did adopt the title Protector of Freemasonry, along with the lengthy list of other titles he assumed when he became emperor in 1804" (*Freemasonry for Dummies,* Indianapolis: Wiley, 2005, p. 42).

[87] Hunt, op. cit., 1998, p. 37.

[88] Doyle, op. cit., p. 195. The Robespierrist lawyer Bertrand Barère said, borrowing a phrase from Thomas Jefferson: "The tree of liberty does not flourish unless moistened with the blood of kings. I vote for death" (in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 522).

postponed indefinitely. This was defeated by 361 to 360, a single vote. Philippe Egalité voted against the proposal, so his vote decided the issue. On 20 January a resolution that the death sentence should be immediately carried out was passed by 380 to 310, and Louis was guillotined the next day."[89]

After the execution a huge old man with a long beard who had been prominent in the murdering of priests during the September riots mounted the scaffold, plunged both hands into the king's blood and sprinkled the people with it, shouting: "People of France! I baptise you in the name of Jacob and Freedom!"[90]

Who was Jacob? Jewry? Were the French now baptised into the ever-restless spirit of the Jewish revolution, which had said: "His blood be on us and on our children"?... Or was the execution of the king revenge on the French monarchy for the execution of Jacques de Molet, last head of the Templars and hero of Masonry's 30th degree?...

"When the executioner help up his severed head for all to see, a few people in the crowd cut their own throats, others threw themselves into the Seine. A number went mad.

"This was not because they bore any particular affection for the king. It was because he was the anointed of God, and it was he who gave validity to the ideological and cultural compound that was France…

"Traditionally, the death of a king of France was announced with the phrase: *'Le Roi est mort, vive le Roi!'*, in order to stress the continuity of the institution of monarchy. When the king's head, was held aloft on that sunless day, the crowd assembled around the scaffold shouted: *'Vive la Nation!'* The message was unequivocal. The nation had replaced the king as the sovereign and therefore as the validating element in the state. The dead king's God had been superseded by 'Our Lord Mankind', to use the words of one prominent revolutionary."[91]

The execution of the king was the signal for the abandonment of all restraint. Robespierre proclaimed "the Terror", which, as Simon Jenkins points out, "was a specific policy, not a later description of anarchy. Robespierre said, 'The foundations of popular government in a revolution are virtue and terror; terror without virtue is disastrous; virtue without terror is powerless. The Government of the Revolution is the despotism of liberty over tyranny.' This phraseology became the thinking of dictators down the ages…"[92]

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[89] Ridley, op. cit., pp. 136-137.

[90] Eliphas Levi, in Fomin, op. cit., p. 38. Who was Jacob? There are various theories. Some think it was Jacob Molet, the leader of the Templars who was executed by the Catholic Church. Others think it refers to Masons of the Scottish rite who were supporters of the Stuart Jacobites. Others think it was a reference to the Patriarch Jacob's "struggle with God" in Genesis 32.

[91] Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

[92] Jenkins, *A Short History of Europe,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2018, p. 176.

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The revolution now turned global, or at any rate European. In February, 1793, after the British broke off relations because of the execution of the king, the Convention declared war on the British and the Dutch, and in effect "bade defiance to the whole of Europe. 'They threaten you with kings!' roared Danton to the Convention. 'You have thrown down your gauntlet to them, and this gauntlet is a king's head, the signal of their coming death.' 'We cannot be calm,' claimed the ever-bombastic Brissot, 'until Europe, all Europe, is in flames.'"[93]

This is the characteristic note of the revolution: joy in destruction.

No matter that the Declaration of the Rights of Man had declared for the freedom of every nation: revolutionary casuistry interpreted sovereignty to be the right only of revolutionary nations; all others deserved to become slaves of the Republic. On December 15, 1792 "generals were authorized in all occupied territories to introduce the full social programme of the French Republic. All existing taxes, tithes, feudal dues, and servitudes were to be abolished. So was nobility, and all types of privilege. The French motto would be, declared some deputies, *War on the castles, peace to the cottages!* In the name of peace, help, fraternity, liberty and equality, they would assist all people to establish 'free and popular' governments, with whom they would then co-operate."[94]

But practice did not match theory: the theory of cosmopolitan universalism too often gave way to the practice of imperialist nationalism. Thus when Holland was conquered by the revolutionary armies under Dumouriez, "it was compelled to cede various southern territories, including control of the mouth of the Scheldt, and pay for the upkeep of a French occupying army of 25,000 men. Finally, it was forced to conclude an alliance with the French Republic whose chief attraction was to place the supposedly formidable Dutch navy in the balance against Great Britain. This, then, was what the fraternity and help of the French Republic actually meant: total subordination to French needs and purposes."[95] As Bernard Simms writes, "the 'reason', 'fraternity', 'equality' and 'liberty' offered by France were rejected not only because they were an outside imposition, but because they were highly oppressive in practice. 'I attest,' Napoleon's foreign minister, Talleyrand, cautioned, 'that any system which aims at taking freedom by open force to other peoples will only make that freedom hated and prevent its triumph.'"[96]

However, the revolutionary army was defeated by the Austrians at Neerwinden. Dumouriez then changed sides, and it was only the army's refusal to co-operate that prevented him from marching on Paris to restore the constitution of 1791 with Louis XVII as king.[97]

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[93] Doyle, op. cit., p. 201.
[94] Doyle, op. cit., p. 199.
[95] Doyle, op. cit., p. 210.
[96] Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy,* London: Allen Lane, 2013, pp. 166-167.

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Imperialism abroad was matched by despotism at home, forced conscription and crippling taxes. And now for the first time there was massive resistance: the peasants in the western regions of Brittany and the Vendée rebelled. This was by far the most serious and prolonged rebellion that the revolutionaries were to face. It was fought under the banner of the restoration of the monarchy and the Church. The rebels wore "sacred hearts, crosses, and the white cockade of royalism. 'Long live the king and our good priests,' was their cry. 'We want our king, our priests and the old regime.'"[98]

But the rebels were crushed with great cruelty and the loss of about 250,000 lives, about ten times more than were claimed by the guillotine.[99] General Westermann reported to the Convention: "The Vendée is no more… I have buried it in the woods and marshes of Savenay… According to your orders, I have trampled their children beneath our horses' feet; I have massacred their women, so they will no longer give birth to brigands. I do not have a single prisoner to reproach me. I have exterminated them all. The roads are sown with corpses. At Savenay, brigands are arriving all the time claiming to surrender, and we are shooting them non-stop… Mercy is not a revolutionary sentiment"[100]

However, the counter-revolution in other parts of the country, and especially in Marseilles, Lyons and Bourdeaux, was less principled and therefore much less effective. As one general reported of the Bordelais: "They appeared to me determined not to involve themselves in Parisian affairs, but more determined still to retain their liberty, their property, their opulence… They don't want a king: they want a republic, but a rich and tranquil republic."[101] This difference in motivation between different parts of the counter-revolution, and the failure of many of its leaders to condemn the revolution *in toto and as such*, doomed it to failure in the long term. As long as the revolutionaries held the centre, and were able to use the methods of terror and mass conscription to send large armies into the field against their enemies, the advantage lay with them. Again, we see a close parallel with the Russian Civil War, where the Reds won because they held the centre and were more united ideologically than the Whites.

Pierre Vergniaud said before the Convention in March, 1793: "It must be feared that the Revolution, like Saturn, will devour its children one after the other."[102] And so it turned out. For they began devouring their own brothers –

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[97] Doyle, op. cit., p. 227.

[98] Doyle, op. cit., p. 226.

[99] Jenkins (op. cit) claims that there were up to 400,000 deaths.

[100] Westermann, in Davies, op. cit., p. 705.

[101] Doyle, op. cit., p. 242.

[102] Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 522).

all, of course, in the spirit of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. As Roland put it: "Liberty! How many crimes are committed in thy name!"[103]

First, between May 31 and June 2, 1793 a coup was carried out against the Girondists. For the struggle between the Girondists and the Montagnards was in fact, according to Lev Tikhomirov, a struggle between different layers of Masonry.[104] Then, "in July 1793," writes Jasper Ridley, "a young Girondin woman, Charlotte Corday, gained admission to Marat's house by pretending that she wished to give him a list of names of Girondins to be guillotined. Finding him sitting as usual in his bath to cure his skin disease, she stabbed him to death.[105] She was guillotined, and the Girondin party was suppressed.

"In Lyons, the Girondins had gained control of the Freemasons' lodges. In the summer of 1793 the Girondins there defied the authority of the Jacobin government in Paris, and guillotined one of the local Jacobin leaders. The Lyons Freemasons played a leading part in the rising against the Paris Jacobins; but the Jacobins suppressed the revolt, and several of the leading Girondin Freemasons of Lyons were guillotined."[106]

On October 31, 1793 the Girondists went to the guillotine. In March it was the turn of the Hébertists; in April – of the Dantonists. On March 27 the Revolutionary Army was disbanded. By the end of April the commune had been purged. As the Girondin Manon Roland said just before his execution: "Oh, Liberty! How many crimes are committed in thy name!"[107]

Now the Terror went into overdrive. The guillotine fell on traitors, backsliders, suspects, speculators and "egoists". "The spirit of moderation," declared Leclerc, needed to be expunged. On September 17 a comprehensive Law of Suspects was passed, which empowered committees "to arrest anyone who 'either by their conduct, their contacts, their words or their writings, showed themselves to be supporters of tyranny, of federalism, or to be enemies of liberty', as well as a number of more specific categories such as former nobles 'who have not constantly manifested their attachment to the revolution.' Practically anybody might fall foul of such a sweeping law. In the weeks following even everyday speech acquired a sansculotte style. Those who refused to call each other 'citizen' rather than the deferential 'Monsieur', and to use the familiar form of address (*tutoiement*), fell under automatic suspicion. Then on 29 September the Convention passed a General Maximum Law which imposed price controls on a wide range of goods defined as of first necessity from food and drink to fuel, clothing, and even tobacco. Those who sold them above the maximum would be fined and placed on the list of suspects. The Revolutionary Army was at last set on foot…"[108]

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[103] Roland, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 523.

[104] Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 458. "In the period of the terror the majority of Masonic lodges were closed. As Louis Blanc explains, a significant number of Masons, though extremely liberal-minded, could still not, in accordance with their personal interests, character and public position, sympathize with the incitement of the maddened masses against the rich, to whom they themselves belonged. In the hottest battle of the revolution it was those who split off into the highest degrees who acted. The Masonic lodges were replaced by political clubs, although in the political clubs, too, there began a sifting of the revolutionaries into the more moderate and the extremists, so that quite a few Masons perished on the scaffolds from the hands of their 'brothers'. After the overthrow of Robespierre on 9 Thermidor the Masonic lodges were again opened." (op. cit., p. 460).

[105] David's painting of the dead Marat in his bath gave the revolution an "iconic" representation of its first martyr. (V.M.)

[106] Ridley, op. cit., p. 140.

[107] Roland, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 523.

The 1793 Constitution, writes Jacqueline Mulhallen, "provided universal male suffrage and some control over representatives, but France was at war and instead of the Constitution, people got the Committee of Public Safety"[109], which now took over control of the government, subject only to the oversight of the Convention. This was the decisive moment, when democracy of a sort became a despotism. The change was said to be temporary and justified by the emergency situation. "It is impossible," said Saint-Just in the Committee's name, "for revolutionary laws to be executed if the government itself is not constituted in a revolutionary way."[110] "Does your government, then, resemble a despotism?" asked Robespierre. "Yes, as the sword which glitters in the hands of liberty's heroes resembles the use with which tyranny's lackeys are armed. Let the despot govern his brutalized subjects by terror; he is right to do this, as a despot. Subdue liberty's enemies by terror, and you will be right, as founders of the Republic."[111]

On October 12 the Committee "moved a decree that Lyons should be destroyed. Its very name was to disappear, except on a monument among the ruins which would proclaim 'Lyons made war on Liberty. Lyons is no more.'"[112] Lyons was not completely destroyed, but whole ranges of houses were burnt and thousands were guillotined and shot. "The effect… was designed to be a salutory one. 'What cement for the Revolution!' gloated Achard in a letter to Paris."[113]

In order to carry out its totalitarian programme of control of the whole population, the government issued "certificates of *civisme* – identity cards and testimonials of public reliability all in one. Originally only foreigners had been required to carry these documents, but the Law of Suspects made the requirement general [thereby showing that for the revolutionary government all citizens were aliens]. Those without them were liable to arrest and imprisonment; and in fact up to half a million people may have been imprisoned as suspects of one sort or another during the Terror. Up to 10,000 may have died in custody, crowded into prisons never intended for such numbers, or makeshift quarters no better equipped. These too deserve to be numbered among the victims of the Terror, although not formally condemned. So do those who were murdered or lynched without trial or official record during the chaotic, violent autumn of 1793, when the supreme law of public safety seemed to override more conventional and cumbersome procedures. Altogether the true total of those who died under the Terror may have been twice the official figure – around 30,000 people in just under a year… Nor is it true that most of those killed in the Terror were members of the former 'privileged orders', whatever the Revolution's anti-aristocratic rhetoric might suggest. Of the official death sentences passed, less than 9 per cent fell upon nobles, and less than 7 per cent on the clergy. Disproportionately high as these figures may have been relative to the numbers of these groups in the population as a whole, they were not as high as the quarter of the Terror's victims who came from the middle classes. And the vast majority of those who lost their lives in the proscriptions of 1793-4 – two-thirds of those officially condemned and doubtless a far higher proportion of those who disappeared unofficially – were ordinary people caught up in tragic circumstances not of their own making, who made wrong choices in lethal times, when indifference itself counted as a crime."[114]

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[108] Doyle, op. cit., pp. 251-252.

[109] Mulhallen, *Percy Bysshe Shelley,* London: PlutoPress, 2015, p. 3.

[110] Doyle, op. cit., p. 252.

[111] Robespierre, *Report of the Principles of Public Morality*.

[112] Doyle, op. cit., p. 254.

[113] Hunt, op. cit., p. 63.

Still alive was the incarnation of the revolution in this, its bloodiest phase – Robespierre, who said: "I am not a flatterer, a conciliator, an orator, a protector of the people; I myself *am* the people."

So Louis XIV *was* the state, and Robespierre *was* the people: the extremes of left and right do not differ so extremely; they are both despotisms…

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[114] Doyle, op. cit., pp. 258, 259. For precise figures with breakdown according to class and sex, see Hunt, op. cit., p. 70.

6. THE REVOLUTION AND RELIGION

The institution that suffered most in 1789-91 was the Catholic Church. First it lost its feudal dues and lands. Then all the monasteries and convents except those devoted to educational and charitable work were dissolved, and new religious vows were forbidden, and monks and nuns ordered to leave their monasteries, to into the world and marry...

The weakened position of the Church encouraged the Protestants, and in June 300 died in clashes between Catholics and Protestants in Nîmes. Meanwhile, 150,000 papal subjects living in Avignon and the Comtat agitated for integration with France. Pope Pius VI rejected this, and in his letter *Quod Aliquantum* of March 29, 1791 he condemned the Declaration of the Rights of Man and all the religious legislation so far passed in the Assembly - "this absolute liberty which not only assures people of the right not to be disturbed about their religious opinions but also gives them this licence to think, write and even have printed with impunity all that the most unruly imagination can suggest about religion. It is a monstrous right, but it would seem to the Assembly to derive from the equality and freedom natural to all men. But what could be more senseless than to establish among men equality and this unbridled freedom that seems to quench reason… What is more contrary to the rights of the Creator God Who limited human freedom by prohibiting evil, than 'this liberty of thought and action which the National Assembly accords to man in society as an inalienable right of nature'?" [115]

On July 12 a Civil Constitution for the Clergy was passed, rationalizing the Church's organization, putting all the clergy on the State's pay-roll. The 135 bishops were cut down to 85, one for each *département*, and provided one *curé* for every 6,000 inhabitants. Bishops were henceforth to be elected (by an electorate including non-believers, Protestants and Jews) without reference to Rome.[116]The dioceses, writes Comby, "were reduced from 235 to 185, one per department, of which ten were archdioceses. There was to be one parish for every 6000 inhabitants. Bishops and priests would be elected by the same electors, including non-Catholics, who elected the various officials of the department or district. In this way, the legislators thought to return to the origins of the church. A bishop would require his metropolitan (archbishop) to install him; he would write to the pope only to inform him of his appointment and to assure him that he was in communion with him."[117]

The Pope had already, on July 10, pleaded with the King to veto the Civil Constitution, but the king, advised by weak bishops (although only 7 out of 160 took the oath), reluctantly agreed to it. The acceptance or rejection of the Civil Constitution now became a test of faith for Catholics. As opinion polarized, on

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[115] Pope Pius VI, in Jean Comby, *How to Read Church History*, London: SCM Press, 1989, volume 2, p. 113).

[116] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 64.

[117] Comby, op. cit., p. 112.

October 30 thirty bishops from the Assembly signed an *Exposition of Principles*, explaining that, as Doyle writes, "they could not connive at such radical changes without consulting the Church through either a council or the Pope. Nevertheless patriots saw it as an incitement to disobey the law, and local authorities, clamorously supported by Jacobin clubs, began to enforce it. Bishops began to be expelled from suppressed sees; chapters were dissolved. In October and early November the first departmental bishops were elected. But this time the clergy did not meekly accept its fate. There were protests. 'I can no more', declared the incumbent of the doomed see of Senez, 'renounce the spiritual contract which binds me to my Church than I can renounce the promises of my baptism… I belong to my flock in life and in death… If God wishes to test his own, the eighteenth century, like the first century, will have its martyrs.' The first elected bishop, the deputy Expilly, who was chosen by the Finistère department, was refused confirmation by the archbishop of Rennes. In Soissons, the bishop was dismissed by the departmental authorities for denouncing the Civil Constitution. It was impossible to dismiss all the 104 priests of Nantes who did the same, but their salaries were stopped. Evidently there was to be no peaceful transition to a new ecclesiastical order, and indignant local authorities bombarded the Assembly with demands for action. Eventually, on 27 November, action was taken. The deputies decided, after two days of bitter debate, to dismiss at once all clerics who did not accept the new order unequivocally. And to test this acceptance they imposed an oath. All beneficed clergy were to swear after mass on the first available Sunday 'to be faithful to the nation, the King and the law, and to uphold with all their power the constitution declared by the National Assembly and accepted by the king.' All who refused were to be replaced at once through the procedures laid down in the Civil Constitution.

"The French Revolution had many turning-points: but the oath of the clergy was, if not the greatest, unquestionably one of them. It was certainly the Constituent Assembly's most serious mistake. For the first time the revolutionaries forced fellow citizens to choose; to declare themselves publicly for or against the new order… With no word from Rome, the king sanctioned the new decree of 26 December, so that oath-taking (or refusal) dominated public life throughout the country in January and February 1791. The clergy in the Assembly themselves set the pattern, in that they were completely divided. Only 109 took the oath, and only two bishops, one of them Talleyrand. As the deadline approached on 4 January the Assembly was surrounded by crowds shouting for nonjurors to be lynched; and the patriots, led unpersuasively by the Protestant Barnave, used every possible argument and procedural ploy to sway waverers. But there were none. And faced with this example from the majority of clerical deputies, it is little wonder that so many clerics in the country at large became refractories (as nonjurors were soon being called)… Above all, there was a massive refusal of the oath throughout the west…In the end, about 54 per cent of the parish clergy took the oath. This suggests that well over a third of the country was now prepared to signal that the Revolution had gone far enough…"[118]

There is a bitter irony in these events. How often, since the eleventh century, had Popes bent western kings to their evil will! However, as present events now demonstrated, these were pyrrhic victories, which, in weakening the Monarchy, ultimately weakened the Church, too, in that Church and Monarchy are the two essential pillars of every Christian society. Right up to the Reformation the Popes had failed to understand that attacks on the throne were also attacks on the altar, and that an accusation of "royal despotism" would almost invariably be linked with one of "episcopal despotism". The Counter-Reformation Popes were more careful to respect monarchical authority, and Louis XIV's abrupt about-turn from Gallicanism to Ultramontanism witnessed to their continuing influence. But the constant political intrigues of the papal Society of the Jesuits, which made them a kind of "state within the state", led to their being banned by all the governments of Western Europe - a severe blow from which the power of the Popes never fully recovered and which was an important condition of the success of the revolution. The Masons and even more radical groups like the Illuminati were quick to take the place of the Jesuits as the main threat to established authority, while using the Jesuits' methods. And now, at the end of the eighteenth century, when papism was in full retreat before the onslaught of enlightened despots like Joseph II and revolutionary democrats like the French National Assembly, and the Popes were desperately in need of the support of "Most Catholic Kings" such as Louis XVI, they paid the price for centuries of papal anti-monarchism. Indeed, since it was Papism that destroyed the Orthodox symphony of powers, and thereby created the conditions for the revolution, there was reason in Catherine II's suggestion that the European powers "embrace the Greek religion to save themselves from this immoral, anarchic, wicked and diabolical plague…"[119]

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In its second, Jacobin phase the revolution revealed its anti-Christian essence more clearly. Thus the eulogy at the funeral of Marat in July, 1793 it was proclaimed: "O heart of Marat, *sacré coeur…* can the works and benevolence of the son of Mary be compared with those of the Friend of the People and his apostles to the Jacobins of our holy Mountain?… Their Jesus was but a false prophet but Marat is a god…"[120]

The revolution was in essence anti-Christian because it gave birth to a new faith instead of Christianity: the cult of the nation. Let us recall the earlier stages in the rise of the cult of the nation: the oath to the nation that Rousseau provided for Napoleon's native Corsica; the birth of the American nation in 1776; the abortive Irish revolution of 1783; the abortive Dutch revolution of 1785, which declared liberty the "inalienable right" of every citizen, and whose "Leiden draft" declared: "the Sovereign is none other than the vote of the people".[121] These were important harbingers of the future. But they were mere dress-rehearsals for the full emergence of the new faith, whose foundation stone, as we have seen, was the third of the Rights of Man: "The principle of all sovereignty lies in the nation. No body of men, and no individual, can exercise authority which does not emanate directly therefrom."

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[118] Doyle, op. cit, pp. 143-144,145.
[119] Catherine II, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 520.
[120] Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 523.

It should be understood that this was not simply an expression of patriotism, but *a new faith* to replace all existing faiths. For "the nation, as Abbé Siéyès put it, recognized no interest on earth above its own, and accepted no law or authority other than its own – neither that of humanity at large nor of other nations"[122] – nor, it goes without saying, of God. The nation therefore stood in the place of God; in the strict sense of the word, it was an idol.[123]

But what precisely *was* the nation? To this question the prophet of nationalism, Rousseau, had provided the answer. The nation, he said, is revealed in the general will, which was not to be identified with the will of any individual, such as the king, or group, such as a parliamentary majority, but only in some spontaneous, mystical upswelling of emotion that carried all before it. It was a "holy madness", to use Lafayette's phrase.[124]

"'He who would dare to undertake to establish a nation would have to feel himself capable of altering, so to speak, human nature, to transform each individual, who by his very nature is a unique and perfect whole, into a mere part of a greater whole, from which this individual would in a sense receive his life and his being,' Rousseau had written. He understood that any polity, however logical, simple, elegant, poetic or modern, would be inadequate to replace the layered sacrality of something like the Crown of France and the whole theological and mythical charge of the Catholic Church. Human emotions needed something richer to feed on than a mere 'system' if they were to be engaged. And engaged they must be, for if one removed religious control of social behaviour and the monarch's role as ultimate arbiter, the very fount-head of civil sanction would dry up. Something had to be put in their place. The question was ultimately how to induce people to be good in a godless society.

"As it was the people themselves who gave the state its legitimacy, it was they who had to be invested with divinity. The monarch would be replaced by a disembodied sovereign in the shape of the nation, which all citizens must be taught to 'adore'. 'It is education that must give to the souls of men the national form, and so direct their thoughts and their tastes, that they will be patriotic by inclination, by passion, by necessity,' Rousseau explained. This education included not only teaching but also sport and public ceremonies designed to inculcate the desired values. 'From the excitement caused by this common emulation will be born that patriotic intoxication which alone can elevate men above themselves, and without which liberty is no more than an empty word and legislation but an illusion.'

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[121] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 35.

[122] Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 80.

[123] As Hobsbawm rightly comments: "'The people' identified with 'the nation' was a revolutionary concept; more revolutionary than the bourgeois-liberal programme which purported to express it." (op. cit., p. 80)

[124] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 88.

"A precondition of this was the total elimination of Christianity. Being a sentimental person, Rousseau could not remain entirely unmoved by what he saw as the 'sublime' core of Christianity. But the existence of a morally independent religion alongside the civil institutions was bound to be destructive. 'Far from binding the hearts of the citizens to the state, it detaches them from it, as from all earthly things,' he writes: 'I can think of nothing more contrary to the social spirit.' It forced on people 'two sets of laws, two leaders, two motherlands', subjecting them to 'contradictory duties' and preventing them from being 'both devout practitioners and good citizens'. Christianity demanded self-denial and submission, but only to God, and not to any creation of Man's. A Christian's soul could not be fused with the 'collective soul' of the nation, challenging the very basis of Rousseau's proposition. His assertion that 'a man is virtuous when his particular will is in accordance in every respect with the general will', was heresy in Christian terms, according to which virtue consists in doing the will of God. There was no room for someone whose ultimate loyalty was to God in Rousseau's model, which substituted the nation for God."[125]

"Anthropologically visualized as a universal ideal female, the nation kindled desire for selfless sacrifice in its cause, and that was the great strength of the French revolution. 'Since it appeared to be more concerned with the regeneration of the human race than with reforming France, it aroused feelings that no political revolutions had hitherto managed to inspire,' explained Tocqueville. 'It inspired proselytism and gave birth to the *propagande*,' he continued, and, 'like Islam, flooded the whole world with its soldiers, its apostles and its martyrs.'"[126]

A programme known as de-christianization was now launched. All the churches in Paris were closed, and the royal tombs destroyed. The calendar and festivals of the old religion were replaced by those of the new, civic religion of the nation: July 14 (Bastille Day), August 10, January 21 (the day of the execution of Louis XVI) and May 31 (the day of the establishment of the Jacobin tyranny).

As Bamber Gascoigne writes: "August 10th was the first anniversary of the day on which the Paris mob had stormed the Tuileries and had put an effective end to the monarchy. The occasion was celebrated with a Festival of Regeneration, also known by the even more uninspiring name of Festival of the Unity and Indivisibility of the Republic. Among the ruins of the Bastille Jacques-Louis David had built a huge figure of a seated woman. She was Mother Nature.

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[125] Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

[126] Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 71-72.

From her breasts there spurted two jets of water, at which delegates filled their cups and drank libations. Three months later there was a Festival of Reason, in which an actress from the opera played the Goddess of Reason and was enthroned in the cathedral of Notre-Dame – with the red bonnet of Liberty on her head and a crucifix beneath one of her elegant feet."[127]

In September, 1793 in Nièvre (Loire) the representative Fouché, who, "himself a former priest, came from the Vendée, where he had witnessed the ability of the clergy to inspire fanatical resistance to the Revolution's authority. Christianity, he concluded, could not coexist in any form with the Revolution and, brushing aside what was left of the 'constitutional' Church, he inaugurated a civic religion of his own devising with a 'Feast of Brutus' on 22 September at which he denounced 'religious sophistry'. Fouché particularly deplored clerical celibacy: it set the clergy apart, and in any case made no contribution to society's need for children. Clerics who refused to marry were ordered to adopt and support orphans or aged citizens. The French people, Fouché declared in a manifesto published on 10 October, recognized no other cult but that of universal morality; and although the exercise of all creeds was proclaimed to be free and equal, none might henceforth be practised in public. Graveyards should exhibit no religious symbols, and at the gate of each would be an inscription *Death is an eternal sleep.* Thus began the movement known as dechristianization. Soon afterwards Fouché moved on to Lyons; but during his weeks in Nevers his work had been watched by Chaumette, visiting his native town from Paris. He was to carry the idea back to the capital, where it was energetically taken up by his colleagues at the commune.

"Other representatives on mission, meanwhile, had also taken to attacking the outward manifestations of the Catholic religion. At Abbeville, on the edge of priest-ridden Flanders, Dumont favoured forced public abjuration of orders, preferably by constitutional clergy whose continued loyalty to the Revolution could only now be proved by such gestures. On October 7 in Rheims, Ruhl personally supervised the smashing of the phial holding the sacred oil of Clovis used to anoint French kings. None of this was authorized by the Convention: on the other hand the adoption on 5 October of a new republican calendar marked a further stage in the divorce between the French State and any sort of religion. Years would no longer be numbered from the birth of Christ, but from the inauguration of the French Republic on 22 September 1792. Thus it was already the Year II. There would be twelve thirty-day months with evocative, seasonal names; each month would have three ten-day weeks (*décades*) ending in a rest-day (*décadi*). Sundays therefore disappeared and could not be observed unless they coincided with the less-frequent *décadis*. The introduction of the system at this moment only encouraged representatives on mission to intensify their lead; and dechristianization became an important feature of the Terror in all the former centres of rebellion when they were brought to heel. Once launched it was eminently democratic. Anybody could join in smashing images, vandalizing churches (the very word was coined to describe this outburst of iconoclasm), and theft of vestments to wear in blasphemous mock ceremonies. Those needing pretexts could preach national necessity when they tore down bells or walked off with plate that could be recast into guns or coinage. Such activities were particular favourites among the Revolutionary Armies. The Parisian detachments marching to Lyons left a trail of pillaged and closed churches, and smouldering bonfires of ornaments, vestments, and holy pictures all along their route. Other contributions took more organization, but Jacobin clubs and popular societies, not to mention local authorities, were quite happy to orchestrate festivals of reason, harmony, wisdom, and other such worthy attributes to former churches; and to recruit parties of priests who, at climactic moments in these ceremonies, would renounce their vows and declare themselves ready to marry. If their choice fell on a former nun, so much the better.

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[127] Gascoigne, *A Brief History of Christianity,* London: Robinson, 2003, p. 215.

"When Chaumetter returned from Nevers, the Paris Commune made dechristianization its official policy. On 23 October the images of kings on the front of Notre-Dame were ordered to be removed: the royal tombs at Saint-Denis had already been emptied and desecrated by order of the Convention in August. The word *Saint* began to be removed from street names, and busts of Marat replaced religious statues. Again the Convention appeared to be encouraging the trend when it decreed, on 20 October, that any priest (constitutional or refractory) denounced for lack of *civisme* by six citizens would be subject to deportation, and any previously sentenced to deportation but found in France should be executed. Clerical dress was now forbidden in Paris, and on 7 November Gobel, the elected constitutional bishop, who had already sanctioned clerical marriage for his clergy, came with eleven of them to the Convention and ceremonially resigned his see. Removing the episcopal insignia, he put on a cap of liberty and declared that the only religion of a free people should be that of Liberty and Equality. In the next few days the handful of priests who were deputies followed his example. Soon Grégoire, constitutional bishop of Blois, was the only deputy left clinging to his priesthood and clerical dress. The sections meanwhile were passing anti-clerical motions, and on 12 November that of Gravilliers, whose idol had so recently been Jacques Roux, sent a deputation to the Convention draped in 'ornaments from churches in their district, spoils taken from the superstitious credulity of our forefathers and repossessed by the reason of free men' to announce that all churches in the section had been closed. This display followed a great public ceremony held in Notre-Dame, or the 'Temple of Reason', as it was now redesignated, on the tenth. On this occasion relays of patriotic maidens in virginal white paraded reverently before a temple of philosophy erected where the high altar had stood. From it emerged, at the climax of the ceremony, a red-capped female figure representing Liberty. Appreciatively described by an official recorder of the scene as 'a masterpiece of nature', in daily life she was an actress; but in her symbolic role she led the officials of the commune to the Convention, where she received the fraternal embrace of the president and secretaries.

"However carefully choreographed, there was not much dignity about these posturings; and attacks on parish churches and their incumbents (who were mostly now popularly elected) risked making the Revolution more enemies than friends. Small-town and anti-religious Jacobin zeal, for example, provoked a minor revolt in the Brie in the second week in December. To shouts of *Long live the Catholic Religion, we want our priests, we want the Mass on Sundays and Holy Days,* crowds of peasants sacked the local club. Several thousands took up arms and joined the movement, and only a force of National Guards and sansculottes from the Revolutionary Army restored order in a district whose tranquillity was vital to the regular passage of food supplies to the capital from southern Champagne. But even before this the Committee of Public Safety was growing anxious about the counter-productive effects of dechristianization. Robespierre in particular, who believed that religious faith was indispensable to orderly, civilized society, sounded the alarm. On November 21 he denounced anti-religious excesses at the Jacobin club. They smacked of more fanaticism than they extinguished.[128] The people believed in a Supreme Being, he warned, whereas atheism was aristocratic.[129] At the same time he persuaded the Committee to circularize popular societies warning them not to fan superstition and fanaticism by persecution. On 6 December, finally, the Convention agreed to reiterate the principle of religious freedom in a decree which formally prohibited all violence or threats against the 'liberty of cults'. But by then it was too late. The example of Paris had encouraged Jacobin zealots everywhere, and with the repression of revolt in full swing and the role of priests in the Vendée particularly notorious, the remaining trappings of religion were too tempting a target to ignore. The commune's response to Robespierre on 23 November had been to decree the closing of all churches in the capital; and soon local authorities were shutting them wholesale throughout the country. By the spring, churches were open for public worship only in the remotest corners of France, such as the Jura mountains. By then, perhaps 20,000 priests had been bullied into giving up their status, and 6,000 had given their renunciation the ultimate confirmation by marrying. In some areas, such as Provence, dechristianization only reached its peak in March or April 1794."[130]

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Robespierre was still preaching the new, revolutionary definition of virtue and religion. A cult of the goddess reason was instituted, and by the Decree of 18 Floréal (7 May) it was declared that the French people recognised a Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul, and that a cult worthy of the Supreme

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[128] He said: "There are people who are superstitious in perfectly good faith. They are sick people whom we must restore to good health by winning their confidence. A forced curé would drive them to fanaticism. Priests have been denounced for saying the Mass. They will continue to do so all the longer if you try to prevent them. He who wants to prevent them is more fanatical than the priest himself" (in Gascoigne, op. cit., p. 214). (V.M.).

[129] He said: "Atheism is aristocratic; the idea of a great being who watches over oppressed innocence, is altogether popular... If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him" (Hunt, op. cit., p. 68). (V.M.)

[130] Doyle, op. cit., pp. 259-262.

Being was the fulfilment of a man's civic duties. Thus the emphasis was still on man's *civic* duties: religion had no independent function outside the State, in accordance with the words of Abbé Guillaume Raynal in 1780: "The State, it seems to me, is not made for religion, but religion for the State."[131] It was the same with morality, which was now defined to include among the highest virtues "the hatred of bad faith and tyranny, the punishment of tyrants and traitors, help to the unhappy, respect for the weak, protection to the oppressed, to do all the good possible to others and to be unjust to nobody."[132]

On 20 Prairial (8 June), Robespierre moved that "the nation should celebrate the Supreme Being. Thus every locality was given a month to make its preparations. The fact that 8 June was also Whit Sunday [Pentecost] may or may not have been a coincidence; if not, it could have been conceived either as a challenge or as an olive branch to Christianity. In the event little direction was given to the localities on how to organize the festival. Some adopted the props of all-too-recent festivals of reason, merely painting out old slogans with new ones. Others used the opportunity to allow mass to be said publicly for the first time in months. But in Paris the organization of the occasion was entrusted to the experienced hands of the painter David, himself a member of the Committee of General Security. He built an artificial mountain in the Champ de Mars, surmounted by a tree of liberty, and thither a mass procession made its way from the Tuileries. At its head marched the members of the Convention, led by their president, who happened that week to be Robespierre. He used the opportunity to deliver two more eulogies of virtue and republican religion, pointedly ignoring, though not failing to notice, the smirks of his fellow deputies at the posturings of this pseudo-Pope. Others found it no laughing matter. 'Look at the bugger,' muttered Thuriot, an old associate of Danton. 'It's not enough for him to be master, he has to be God.'"[133]

On February 12, 1792 the Jacobin club ceremoniously called Voltaire, Rousseau, Franklin and Mirabeau "gods".[134]

But from the spring and summer of 1794 the twilight of the gods began. As E.H. Gombrich writes, Robespierre's power "was almost at an end. Danton had had enough of the daily beheadings and asked for mercy and compassion. Robespierre's reaction to this was to say: 'Only criminals ask for mercy on behalf of criminals.' So Danton, too, was beheaded and Robespierre had his final victory. But soon, after yet another of his interminable speeches, in which he insisted that the executions had barely begun, that freedom's enemies were still all around, that vice was triumphant and the country in peril, it so happened that, for the first time, nobody clapped. Instead there was just a deathly hush. A few days later, he, too, was beheaded."[135]

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[131] Raynal, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 518.
[132] Hunt, op. cit., p. 66.
[133] Doyle, op. cit., p. 277.
[134] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 67.

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With the fall of Robespierre, the revolutionary experiment of creating a church loyal to the revolution came to an end. "On 18 September 1794, the Convention had carried the drift of the Revolution since 1790 to a logical conclusion when it finally renounced the constitutional Church. The Republic, it decreed, would no longer pay the costs or wages of any cult – not that it had been paying them in practice for a considerable time already. It meant the end of state recognition for the Supreme Being, a cult too closely identified with Robespierre. But above all it marked the abandonment of the Revolution's own creation, the constitutional Church. For the first time ever in France, Church and State were now formally separated. To some this decree looked like a return to dechristianization, and here and there in the provinces there were renewed bursts of persecution against refractories. But most read it, correctly, as an attempt to deflect the hostility of those still faithful to the Church from the Republic. The natural corollary came with the decree of 21 February 1795 which proclaimed the freedom of all cults to worship as they liked. The tone of the law was grudging, and it was introduced with much gratuitous denigration of priestcraft and superstition. Religion was defined as a private affair, and local authorities were forbidden to lend it any recognition or support. All outward signs of religious affiliation in the form of priestly dress, ceremonies, or church bells remained strictly forbidden. The faithful would have to buy or rent their own places of worship and pay their own priests or ministers…"[136]

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[135] Gombrich, *A Little History of the World,* London: Yale University Press, 2008, p. 226. Once witnesses and defending counsels had been decreed (on 10 June, 1794) to be no longer necessary in trials, not even Robespierre was safe. On 27 June he fell from power. The next day he was dragged, screaming in terror, to the guillotine.

[136] Doyle, op. cit., p. 288.

7. THE MARQUIS DE SADE

While attacking Christianity, the revolutionaries had felt the need to create a new religion in its place. Moreover, as we have seen, they did not dispense with moral categories altogether (hence their famous Declaration of Human Rights), and by 1795 they had even proclaimed a decree on freedom of religion. But in the Marquis de Sade the revolution produced a "philosopher" who was more thoroughly revolutionary even than Robespierre and could be called the first true atheist and amoralist – and even socialist - of European history.

"He became infamous for his numerous sexual crimes and abuse against young men, women, and children. He claimed to be a proponent of absolute freedom, unrestrained by morality, religion, or law. The words *sadism* and *sadist* are derived from his name.

"De Sade was incarcerated in various prisons and an insane asylum for about 32 years of his life: 11 years in Paris (10 of which were spent in the Bastille), a month in the Conciergerie, two years in a fortress, a year in Madelonnettes Convent, three years in Bicêtre Asylum, a year in Sainte-Pélagie Prison, and 12 years in the Charenton Asylum. During the French Revolution, he was an elected delegate to the National Convention... He represented the far left...

"Geoffrey Gorer, an English anthropologist and author (1905–1985), wrote one of the earliest books on Sade, entitled *The Revolutionary Ideas of the Marquis de Sade* in 1935. He pointed out that Sade was in complete opposition to contemporary philosophers for both his 'complete and continual denial of the right to property' and for viewing the struggle in late 18th century French society as being not between 'the Crown, the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy or the clergy, or sectional interests of any of these against one another', but rather all of these 'more or less united against the proletariat.' By holding these views, he cut himself off entirely from the revolutionary thinkers of his time to join those of the mid-nineteenth century. Thus, Gorer argued, 'he can with some justice be called the first reasoned socialist.[137]

In 1797 de Sade's novel *The New Justine* was published anonymously in Paris. In it, as Holland writes, he declared that "virtue is not a world of priceless worth, it is just a way of behaving that varies according to climate and consequently has nothing real about it." "To think otherwise was imbecility. The plot of the novel – which related the adventures of two sisters, one virtuous, the other libertine – demonstrated this in obscene and relentless detail. Justine, ever trusting in the essential goodness of humanity, was repeatedly raped and brutalized; Juliette, ever contemptuous of any kind of virtue, whored and murdered her way to spectacular wealth. Their respective fortunes demonstrated the way of the world. God was a sham. There was only Nature. The weak existed to be enslaved and exploited by the strong. Charity was a cold and pitiless process, and talk of human brotherhood a fraud. That anyone should ever have thought otherwise was due solely to a monstrous scam. 'The religion of that wily little freak Jesus – feeble, sickly, persecuted, singularly desirous to outmanoeuvre the tyrant of the day, to bully them into acknowledging a doctrine of brotherhood from whose acceptance he calculated to gain some respite – Christianity sanctioned these laughable fraternal ties.'

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[137] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marquis_de_Sade

"The scandal of the novel was sufficient, when the identity of its author was finally recovered by Napoleon's chief of police in 1801, to have him flung into jail. The blasphemy, though, was only incidentally against Christianity. The Marquis de Sade was a man who had been brought up in the bosom of the Enlightenment. Schooled from an early age in the writings of the *philosophes*, and with an uncle who had been a close friend of Voltaire, he had always been a free-thinker. Freedom, though, had its limits. Sade's refusal to submit to convention was complicated by the often violent character of his desires. Born in 1741, he had spent his sexual prime frustrated by laws that decreed that even prostitutes and beggars had a right not to be kidnapped, or whipped, or force-fed Spanish fly. Titled though the Marquis was, his escapades before the fall of the Bastille had culminated in his incarceration in France's most notorious prison. There, denied his much-cherished liberty, he had found himself with no lack of time to dwell on the contemptibility of Christian teaching. 'The doctrine of loving one's neighbour is a fantasy that we owe to Christianity, and not to Nature.' Yet even once Sade, set free by the Revolution, had found himself living under 'the reign of philosophy', in a republic committed to casting off the clammy hold of superstition, he had found that the pusillanimous doctrines of Jesus retained their grip. Specious talk of brotherhood was as common in revolutionary committee rooms as it had been in churches. In 1793 – following is improbable election as president of a local committee in Paris – Sade had issued instructions to his fellow-citizens that they should all paint slogans on their houses: 'Unity, Indivisibility of the Republic, Liberty, Fraternity'. Sade himself, though, was no more a Jacobin than he was a priest. The true division in society lay not between friends and enemies of the people, but between those who were naturally masters and those who were naturally slaves. Only when this was appreciated and acted upon would the taint of Christianity finally be eradicated, and humanity live as Nature prescribed. The inferior class of men, so a *philosophe* in *The New Justine* coolly observed, 'is simply the species that stand next above the chimpanzee on the ladder; and the distance separating them is, if anything, less than that between him and the individual belonging to the superior caste.'

"Yet if this was the kind of talk that would see Sade spend his final years in a lunatic asylum, the icy pitilessness of his gaze was not insanity. More clearly than many enthusiasts for enlightenment cared to recognize, he could see that the existence of human rights was no more possible than the existence of God. In 1794, prompted by rebellion in Saint-Domingue, a French-ruled island in the West Indies, and by the necessary logic of the Declaration of Rights, the revolutionary government had proclaimed slavery abolished throughout France's colonies; eight years later, in a desperate and ultimately futile attempt to prevent the blacks of Saint-Domingue from establishing their own republic, Napoleon reinstated it. The shamelessness of this would not have surprised Sade. Those in power were hypocrites. Throughout *The New Justine*, there was not an abbot, not a bishop, not a pope who did not prove to be an atheist and a libertine. Nor, when Sade contemplated the slave trade, was he any the more convinced by the godliness of Protestants. English plantation-owners in the Caribbean – masters of life and death over their human chattels as they were – were among the few contemporaries worthy to be compared to the ancients. 'Wolves eating lambs, lambs devoured by wolves, the strong killing the weak, the weak falling victim to the strong, such is Nature, such are her designs, such is her plan.' The English, like the Spartans or the Romans, understood this. It was why, Sade wrote, they were in the habit of chopping up their slaves and boiling them in vats, or else crushing them in the sugar-cane mills – a slow a way to die as it is dreadful'. There was only the one timeless language: the language of power.

"Progress, that venerable Christian ideal that Abelard had cherished and Milton hymned, was no less a fantasy for having provided revolution with its battle-cry…"[138]

The life of Sade demonstrated that, even after the Jacobin terror, the Enlightenment that engendered it still had some way to go before it plumbed the very depths of human darkness. It was only a step from Sade to Nietzsche and Lenin, who both ended their lives truly mad...

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[138] Holland, *Dominion,* pp. 391-393.

8. THE DIRECTORY AND BABEUF

"It was inevitable," writes Norwich, "that after the removal of Robespierre from the scene there should be a dramatic swing to the right. The Law of 22 Prairial was repealed; it was even proposed that nobles should no longer be condemned because of their birth, or the clergy for their calling. The Jacobin Club was closed; the red caps of liberty were no longer seen in the streets. Many others whose names had been associated with the Terror followed their leader to the scaffold. It was unfortunate only that the winter of 1794-5 should have been the coldest that anyone could remember: the Seine froze over, starving wolves appeared in the towns and villages, and at first signs of spring a sudden thaw led to disastrous floods. For the *sans-culottes,* the situation was worse than it had been before the Revolution began. There were more revolts, more angry demonstrations, all of which were savagely put down. Before long the guillotine was as busy as it had ever been.

"At this point, to the monarchists, a restoration seemed to be after all a possibility – but not for long. Plans for a rising in the south were discovered and quickly dealt with: and a force of émigrés, provided by the British government with uniforms and naval support, actually landed on the south coast of Brittany before being destroyed by the twenty-seven-year-old General Lazare Hoche. Over seven hundred of them, mostly members of the nobility, were shot, in their British uniforms, on the charge of high treason. In Paris, however, the spirit of reaction was as strong as ever. In introducing a new constitution, known as the Constitution of Year III, in August 1795 François Antoine de Boissy d'Anglas spoke words which might cause comment even today: 'Absolute equality is a chimera. If it existed one would have to assume complete equality in intelligence, virtue, physical strength, education and fortune in all men... We must be ruled by the best citizens. And the best are the most learned and the most concerned in the maintenance of law and order. Now, with very few exceptions, you will find such men only among those who own property and are thus attached to the land in which it lies, to the laws which protect it and to the public by which it is maintained... You must therefore guarantee the political rights of the well-to-do... and [deny] unreservedly political right to men without property, for if such men ever find themselves seated among the legislators, they will provoke agitations... and in the end precipitate us into those violent convulsions from which we have scarcely yet emerged.'

"Considering the events of the previous six years, the Constitution of the Year III was a remarkable document indeed. Not only did it include a comprehensive ban on slavery; it also established a liberal republic with the franchise based on payment of taxes, a bicameral legislatureand a five-man Directory, who were to wear a magnificent uniform 'as a protest against sans-culottism'."[139]

And so in 1795 a committee of five, the Directory, was established. Fearing coups from the royalist right as well as from the Jacobin left, it continued the slow torture of the Dauphin, known in history as Louis XVII, who died in prison on June 10. There was a new Constitution which abolished universal suffrage and imposed a high property qualification.

"With the Directory," writes Edmund Wilson, "the French Revolution had passed into the period of reaction which was to make possible the domination of Bonaparte. The great rising of the bourgeoisie, which, breaking out of the feudal forms of the monarchy, dispossessing the nobility and the clergy, had presented itself to society as a movement of liberation, had ended by depositing the wealth in the hands of a relatively small number of people and creating a new conflict of classes. With the reaction against the Terror, the ideals of the Revolution were allowed to go by the board. The five politicians of the Directory and the merchants and financiers allied with them were speculating in confiscated property, profiteering in army supplies, recklessly inflating the currency and gambling on the falling gold louis. And in the meantime, during the winter of 1795-96, the working people of Paris were dying of hunger and cold in the streets."[140]

This situation led to attempts to overthrow the government and return to the Constitution of 1793. The rebels "had no difficulty in drumming up popular support – in Paris the cost of living was about thirty times higher in 1795 than it had been in 1790 – and by the beginning of October the insurgents were some 25,000 strong."[141]

The general that the Directory sent out to crush the rebellion was Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon was a Corsican whose father had resisted the French takeover of Corsica in 1767. So he who was destined to be the incarnation of French nationalism was raised from childhood on the milk of anti-French Corsican nationalism. Moving to France, he profited from his own skills and the fact that the aristocratic leaders of the army had been retired to gain promotion.

On October 5 1795 (13 Vendémiaire) he confronted the rebellion. He sent "a young lieutenant named Joachim Murat [his future brother-in-law and King of Naples] to fetch forty cannon from the plain of Sablons – the modern Neuilly. Fortunately, these arrived before the expected royalist attack, and were strategically placed at key points [in the city centre]… The forces of the Convention were outnumbered by about six to one, but the insurgents fell back when the cannon opened fire. This was what Thomas Carlyle was to describe as the 'whiff o grapeshot… which blew into space the French Revolution.'"[142]

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[139] Norwich, op. cit., pp. 225-226.
[140] Wilson, *To the Finland Station,* London: Phoenix, 2004, p. 71.
[141] Norwich, op. cit., p. 226.

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There was opposition to the regime, not only from royalists within France, but also from the Prussian king and the Austrian emperor, who had declared openly against the revolution and in favour of "our brother", Louis XVI. The warfare of 1792-95 between France and her continental enemies was an up-and-down affair, with victories followed by defeats. In the end, however, the revolutionary armies triumphed. This, as Tim Blanning explains, was owing mainly to two factors: (i) the numerical superiority of the French forces, and (ii) the meritocratic basis of the French army command, which meant that poorly performing generals were removed or even executed, something unheard of in the old regime armies (meritocracy was introduced into the Prussian army only in 1808)[143], and replaced by better ones, of whom the best was Napoleon…

There was an important respect in which the French revolutionary wars of this period were different from earlier, eighteenth-century wars. At that time, as Henry Kissinger writes in his *World Order,* "Wars were fought for limited territorial objectives, not to overthrow existing governments and institutions, nor to impose a new system of relations between states." But now they were fought precisely in order to overthrow existing governments and institutions and replace them with revolutionary ones.

Moreover, corresponding to this new, more radical and ideological purpose of warfare, the call-up was now universal, as befitted total war. Thus in August, 1793, at a particularly low point in French fortunes, the National Convention declared:-

"'From this moment until that in which our enemies shall have been driven from the territory of the Republic, all Frenchmen are permanently requisitioned for service in the armies.

"'The young men shall fight; the married men shall forge weapons and transport supplies; the women will make tents and clothes and will serve in the hospitals; the children will make up old linen into lint; the old men will have themselves carried into the public squares to rouse the courage of fighting men, to preach the unity of the Republic and hatred of Kings.

"'The public buildings shall be turned into barracks, the public squares into munitions factories, the earthen floors shall be treated with lye to extract saltpeter [for the manufacture of gunpowder].

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[142] Norwich, op. cit., pp. 226-227.

[143] Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory. Europe 1648-1815,* London: Penguin, 2008, pp. 637-648; Clark, op. cit., p. 326.

"'All firearms of suitable caliber shall be turned over to the troops: the interior shall be policed with shotguns and with cold steel.

"'All saddle horses shall be seized for the cavalry; all draft horses not employed in cultivation will draw the artillery and supply wagons.'

"This decree is usually referred to as instituting the '*levée en masse*', but it was much more than that. It was also the first declaration of total war. From now on, until total victory was achieved, every man, woman, child, animal and inanimate object was conscripted for the war effort.

"The result was the conscription of what was probably the largest army ever seen in Europe…"[144]

It was soon triumphant. "By early 1795, the French had conquered not only Belgium but the Dutch Republic and the left bank of the Rhine apart from the fortresses of Luxembourg and Mainz. The west had been won…"[145]

Meanwhile, Prussia, Austria and Russia, still not fully cognizant of the threat posed by Napoleon, were occupied in dividing up Poland between them at the second and third partitions of 1793 and 1795. Thus Catherine the Great was more occupied in stifling "Jacobinism" in Poland than in its homeland.

In 1795 the Prussians signed the Peace of Basle with the French, whereby the Prussians took a neutral position, acquiring a kind of hegemony over the north of Germany while France dominated the south. But the Prussians were now faced with a dilemma: Napoleon never accepted any state's neutrality for long, so the Prussians would eventually have to choose to ally themselves with either the French or the Russians. For now that the French had reached the Rhine, and the Russians had taken Eastern Poland, there was no buffer zone between Prussia and the two great powers of the East and the West…

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A still more significant internal challenge came this time, not from the right, but from the left, from the proto-communist "Gracchus" Babeuf, who "rallied around him those elements of the Revolution who were trying to insist on its original aims. In his paper, *The Tribune of the People,* he demanded not merely political but also economic equality. He declared that he would prefer civil war itself to 'this horrible concord which strangles the hungry'. But the men who had expropriated the nobles and the Church remained loyal to the principle of property itself. *The Tribune of the People* was stopped, and Babeuf and his associates were sent to prison.

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[144] Blanning, op. cit. p. 628.

[145] Blanning, op. cit. p. 629. An Anglo-Russian expedition tried but failed to overthrow Napoleon's Batavian republic in 1799.

"While Babeuf was in jail, his seven-year-old daughter died of hunger. He had managed to remain poor all his life. His popularity had been all with the poor. His official posts had earned him only trouble. Now, as soon as he was free again, he proceeded to found a political club, which opposed the policies of the Directory and which came to be known as the Society of the Equals. They demanded in a *Manifesto of the Equals* (not, however, at that time made public) that there should be 'no more individual property in land; the land belonged to no one… We declare that we can no longer endure, with the enormous majority of men, labor and sweat in the service and for the benefit of a small minority. It is has now been long enough and too long that less than a million individuals have been disposing of that which belongs to more than twenty millions of their kind… Never has a vaster design been conceived or put into execution. Certain men of genius, certain sages, have spoken of it from time to time in a low and trembling voice. Not one of them has had the courage to tell the whole truth… People of France! Open your eyes and your heart to the fullness of happiness. Recognize and proclaim with us the Republic of Equals!'

"The Society of Equals was also suppressed; Bonaparte himself closed the club. But, driven underground, they now plotted an insurrection; they proposed to set up a new directory. And they drafted a constitution that provided for 'a great national community of goods' and worked out with some precision the mechanics of a planned society. The cities were to be defiled and the population distributed in villages. The State was to 'seize upon the new-born individual, watch over his early moments, guarantee the milk and care of his mother and bring him to the *maison nationale*, where he was to acquire the virtue and enlightenment of a true citizen.' There was thus to be equal education for all. All able-bodied persons were to work, and the work that was unpleasant or arduous was to be accomplished by everybody's taking turns. The necessities of life were to be supplied by the government, and the people were to eat at communal tables. The government was to control all foreign trade and to pass on everything printed.

"In the meantime, the value of the paper money had depreciated almost to zero. The Directory tried to save the situation by converting the currency into land warrants, which were at a discount of eight-two per cent the day they were issued; and there was a general belief on the part of the public that the government had gone bankrupt. There were in Paris along some five hundred thousand people in need of relief. The Babouvistes placarded the city with a manifesto…; they declared that Nature had given to every man an equal right to the enjoyment of every good, and it was the purpose of society to defend that right, that Nature had imposed on every man the obligation to work, and that no one could escape this obligation without committing a crime; that in 'a true society' there would be neither rich nor poor; that the object of the Revolution had been to destroy every inequality and to establish the well-being of all; that they Revolution was therefore 'not finished', and that those who had done away with the Constitution of 1793 were guilty of *lèse majesté* against the people…

"Babeuf's 'insurrectionary committee' had agents in the army and the police, and they were doing such effective work that the government tried to send its troops out of Paris, and, when they refused to obey, disbanded them. During the early days of May, 1796, on the eve of the projected uprising, the Equals were betrayed by a stool pigeon and their leaders were arrested and put in jail. The followers of Babeuf made an attempt to rally a sympathetic police squadron, but were cut down by a new Battalion of the Guard which had been pressed into service for the occasion.

"Babeuf was made a public example by being taken to Vendôme in a cage – an indignity which not long before had filled the Parisians with fury when the Austrians had inflicted it on a Frenchman…

"[At this trial] the vote, after much disagreement, went against Babeuf. One of his sons had smuggled in to him a tin dagger made out of a candlestick, and when he heard the verdict pronounced, he stabbed himself in the Roman fashion, but only wounded himself horribly and did not die. The next morning (May 27, 1797) he went to the guillotine. Of his followers thirty were executed and many sentenced to penal servitude or deportation."[146]

"The Babeuf plot of 1796," writes Malcolm Crook, "was a reflection of the scant popular support that former Jacobins were now able to muster. The imposition of a new order from above seemed to have replaced the vision of a people seizing power for themselves from below… "[147]

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[146] Wilson, op. cit., pp. 72-74,79.

[147] Crook, *Napoleon comes to power,* Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996, p. 30.

9. NAPOLEON COMES TO POWER

In reward for his ruthless act in suppressing the royalist rebellion of 13 Vendémiaire, the Directory gave Napoleon command of the Army of Italy, in order to spread the revolution there.

"It wasn't long," writes E.H. Gombrich, "before his army had conquered the whole of northern Italy [occupying Venice in May, 1797] and made it a republic along the lines of France or Belgium. Wherever he went, if a beautiful work of art caught his eye, he had it sent to Paris. Then he turned north towards Austria, because the emperor had attacked him in Italy. Messengers from the emperor in Vienna came to meet him in the town of Leoben in Styria. A raised seat had been prepared for the emperor's envoy in the council chamber. 'Take away that chair,' said Napoleon, 'I can never see a throne without feeling the urge to sit on it.' He then demanded that the emperor cede to France all the parts of Germany that lay to the west of the Rhine. After that he returned to Paris."[148]

In 1798 he invaded Egypt, conquering Malta along the way. But Admiral Nelson caught up with him and destroyed his fleet at the Battle of the Nile. After an unsuccessful expedition against the Turks in Palestine, Napoleon fled back ro France, abandoning his army in Egypt. Then, on 19 Brumaire (November 10), 1799, his chance came. He overthrew the Directory, describing parliamentarism as "hot air", and frightened the two elective assemblies into submission. On December 13 a new constitution was proclaimed with Bonaparte as the first of three Consuls with full executive powers. And on December 15 the three Consuls declared: "Citizens, the Revolution is established upon its original principles: it is consummated…"[149]

As well as becoming the consummation of the revolution, Napoleon had become what Robespierre called "a legal dictatorship, the worst of all tyrannies"[150], a despotism that was *sui generis* and comparable only to Cromwell's. As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote: "For the sake of rest and order, the nation throws itself into the arms of a man who is believed sufficiently strong to arrest the Revolution and sufficiently generous to consolidate its gains."[151] Napoleon was quite clear about it: "I am the bookmark that shows the page where the Revolution has been stopped; but when I die it will turn the page and resume its course."[152] So Napoleon was not the enemy of the revolution: he came to power on the crest of its wave, he spread its ideals throughout Europe, and he foresaw its continuance. But while he was alive, it would "have a rest", inside if not outside the country: the fury of revolutionary democracy would be momentarily stilled by the calm of revolutionary despotism.

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[148] Gombrich, *A Little History of the World,* London: Yale University Press, 2008, p. 229.

[149] Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 530.

[150] Robespierre, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 530.

[151] De Tocqueville, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 530.

[152] Attributed to Napoleon, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 530.

"The First Consul," as Paul Johnson writes, "was far more powerful than Louis XIV, since he dominated the armed forces directly in a country that was now organized as a military state. All the ancient restraints on divine-right kingship – the Church, the aristocracy and its resources, the courts, the cities and their charters, the universities and their privileges, the guilds and their immunities – all had been swept away by the Revolution, leaving France a legal blank on which Bonaparte could stamp the irresistible force of his personality."[153]

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Napoleon, by common consent, was a commander of genius, who combined superiority of numbers with speed of movement and tactical vision that time and again caught his enemies by surprise. For Napoleon, military victories were a necessity, not for the nation, but in order to legitimize his position. For "my power proceeds from my reputation, and my reputation from the victories I have won. My power would fall if I were not to support it with more glory and more victories. Conquest has made me what I am; only conquest can maintain me."[154]

He also infected his army with his love of glory – both personal glory and the glory of France - and plunder. The earlier revolutionary ideals of giving freedom and equality to the conquered nations gave way to more egoistic and nationalistic motives.

By the end of May, 1796 Napoleon had taken the whole of Austrian Italy, and in October, 1797 he signed the Treaty of Campio Formo with the Austrians. Its secret articles stipulated that "the Emperor would use his good offices to secure the left bank of the Rhine for France and also that the dispossessed secular princes would be compensated with ecclesiastical land. The Austrian acquisition of Salzburg was the last stage in this process. In the event, nine years were to pass before Francis II abdicated as Holy Roman Emperor and became Francis I, Emperor of Austria, but with Camp Formio the death knell of the 1,000-year-old Holy Roman Empire had rolled…"[155]

In 1800 war resumed, and Napoleon defeated the Austrians again at Marengo. This gave him "complete control of the Po valley as far as the Adige. Napoleon, his reputation sustained despite the narrowness of his victory, returned to Paris, where he took over both the military and the civil authority. In 1801 Austria was forced to sign the Treaty of Lunéville, whereby France regained the old frontiers that Julius Caesar had given to Gaul – the Rhine, the Alps and the Pyrenees: and in 1802 the Treaty of Amiens briefly – very briefly – put an end to hostilities between France and Great Britain."[156]

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[153] Johnson, *Napoleon,* London: Phoenix, 2002, p. 46.
[154] Napoleon, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 531.
[155] Blanning, op. cit. p. 636.
[156] Norwich, op. cit., p. 238.

Napoleon was now dominant in Europe (the Russians had withdrawn temporarily from the fray). Only in relation to one country, did Napoleon suffer frustration, if not defeat: Britain… "French grand strategy," writes Dominic Lieven, "has to be judged within the context of the century-old struggle with Britain. After 1793 British naval superiority more or less confined French imperialism to the European continent. The enormous gains made by the British outside Europe since 1793, not to mention their ever-growing economic power, meant that, unless Napoleon created some form of French empire within Europe, the struggle with Britain was lost…"[157]

As Eric Hobsbawm notes, the Anglo-French conflict had "a persistence and stubbornness unlike any other. [Embittered by the many wars they had already fought in the eighteenth century,] neither side was really prepared to settle for less than total victory" – a rare thing in those days, though a common one in our still more savage times.[158] The first legacy of the revolution, therefore, was *total war*: war between classes, war between nations, war between religions (for the revolution, as have seen, must be counted as a religion). David Bell argues that many of the elements of "total war" – conscription, total disregard for the rules of combat, guerilla warfare, the perverse idea of war for the sake of peace – were first practised, not in the First World War, as often thought, but during Napoleon's revolutionary wars.[159]

Such was the "fraternity" created by the revolution…

As for the English, Napoleon had a particular animus against them, that "nation of shopkeepers", as he contemptuously called them, the one nation he never succeeded in defeating on the battlefield, that fought him longer than any other, and in whose captivity he finally died. The origin of this animus may have been Britain's temporary conquest of his own native land of Corsica.

But let us begin at the beginning of this titanic struggle…

Tombs writes: "The Royal Navy sailed into France's base at Toulon in August 1793 to support rebels there, but had to withdraw under the cannon fire of a young artillery officer, Napoleon Bonaparte, in December, after capturing or torching the French Mediterranean fleet. A landing at Quiberon Bay in July 1795 of a force of émigrés to help other rebels in western France ended in massacre. Financial aid by Britain to resurgent royalist parties in France, and the recruitment of agents at the heart of the republican regime – even its police and army – by British secret agents, came to nothing when the same General Bonaparte crushed a royalist uprising in Paris in October 1795. Corsican patriots threw out the French and asked to join the British Empire, but the island could not be held long and was evacuated in 1796. The dynamic Bonaparte marched into Italy in 1796 and crushingly defeated the Austrians, who were forced to yield control of northern Italy to France and accept French annexation of the Austrian Netherlands and the Rhineland. Britain's naval bases in Italy were threatened, and in 1797 the Royal Navy had to evacuate the Mediterranean. Pitt was willing to make peace with a reasonable French republic, if such emerged. As early as December 1795 the King's Speech had hinted at negotiations, but the French returned an 'insolent' response demanding the return of all colonies and acceptance of its huge territorial expansion. [Prime Minister William] Pitt was left hoping for 'the return of reason to our deluded enemy'. Though he won a general election in 1796, he and the Cabinet were close to despair over the war: 'We shall be left to sustain alone the conflict with France and Holland, probably joined by Spain, and perhaps favoured more or less openly by the Northern powers,' and though 'with proper exertion we can make our party good against them all,' victory seemed inconceivable."

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[157] Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon,* London: Penguin, 2016, p. 97.

[158] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848,* London: Abacus, 1992, p. 109.

[159] Bell, *The First Total War,* London: Bloomsbury, 2007.

The low point was reached in 1797, when the anti-Napoleonic coalition collapsed. Only Britain fought on, buoyed by victories over the Spanish at Cape St. Vincent (1797) and over the Dutch at Camperdown (1797), and by the seizure of many of their overseas colonies. However, Britain's other main asset (apart from her superb navy), her financial strength, was beginning to fail her: in 1797 the Bank of England temporarily suspended cash payments and Pitt introduced income tax…

But in 1798, continues Tombs, "hope suddenly dawned. Bonaparte led an invasion of Egypt, aiming to dominate the Mediterranean and perhaps march on India: 'Truly to overthrow England,' he argued, 'we must occupy Egypt'. But his fleet was annihilated by Nelson at the battle of the Nile in August: eleven out of thirteen warships were destroyed or captured, and Bonaparte abandoned his army in Egypt and escaped back to France. This gave a fillip to all France's enemies, and a 'Second Coalition' of Austria, Russia, Turkey and Britain prepared a final effort. The revolution now seemed doomed: revolts erupted throughout the occupied territories and in western and southern France, while pro-French rebels in Ireland and Naples were bloodily crushed. In 1799 the Russians and Austrians advanced through Italy, Switzerland and Germany. British and Russian troops landed in Holland and captured the Dutch fleet. Bonaparte seized dictatorial power as First Consul in November 1799, telling his troops that the politicians were in British pay. He offered peace terms, which were promptly rejected. London thought he was playing for time: 'The whole game is in our hands now, and it wants little more than *patience* to play it *well, to the end*.' The final push was set for the summer of 1800, with coordinated invasions of France from several directions. But everything unraveled as the allies fell out and the French rallied. Consul Bonaparte showed himself to be more than just another ambitious general, when he ended internal rebellion by force and concession and then marched an army rapidly over the Alps to defeat the surprised Austrians at Marengo on 14 June. This effectively finished off the shaky Second Coalition. Bonaparte sent a letter to the Austrian emperor, supposedly written on the field of Marengo 'surrounded by 15,000 corpses', offering peace and blaming the war solely on the greed of England – an explanation that many in Europe found plausible.

"Now it was Britain that suddenly faced defeat. Austria and Russia sought peace. Bonaparte was preparing an alliance with Spain to attack Ireland, Portugal and India. Prussia occupied Hanover, the last British foothold in Europe. Russia, Denmark and Sweden were forming an 'Armed Neutrality' and excluding British ships from the Baltic [which was vital to Britain for the procurement of wood for ship-building]. Gold reserves dwindled and bread prices rose to three times their 1798 level. Oxford students were rationed; others less fortunate starved. A wave of riots tied down a large part of the army. Demands for peace became deafening. Pitt, on the edge of a breakdown, resigned in March 1801 when the king refused to extend equal rights to Catholics following the union with Ireland. The English now lived their recurring nightmare: an enemy dominating the Continent. This had to be pre-empted by what a minister called 'one brilliant act of British enterprise [that] would intervene to check and soften the uniformity of calamity and defeat'. In fact there were two. In March 1801 General Abercrombie forced a landing in Egypt and went on to defeat a larger French army – a remarkable success for the despised Redcoats. In April Nelson, at the first battle of Copenhagen, destroyed the Danish fleet, threatened to bombard the city, and forced Denmark to withdraw from the 'Armed Neutrality', whose other members prudently did likewise. The pro-French Tsar Paul was assassinated, and Russian rapprochement with France halted.

"So the unwinnable war could be ended. In November 1801, Pitt made a frank admission to the Commons, if not of defeat, certainly of partial failure: '[Our] great object… was defence in a war waged against most of the nations of Europe, but against us with particular malignity… I had hopes of our being able to put together the scattered fragments of that great and venerable edifice [the French monarchy] in the stead of that mad system which threatened the destruction of Europe… This, it is true, has been found unsustainable.' Britain concluded the Treaty of Amiens in March 1802, in which it agreed to return most overseas conquests except Trinidad and Ceylon, and effectively recognized the Continental hegemony of a much enlarged France, including even control of the Low Countries. No agreement in our modern history, except that of Munich in 1938, has been so vilified and so welcomed. Food prices fell precipitously and rioting subsided. A jubilant Lambeth publican gave away all his beer. The London Corresponding Society wrote an adulatory letter to Bonaparte declaring their devotion to France and thanking him that 'peace reigns on earth, and this is the work of Frenchmen.' Charles James Fox owned that 'the Triumph of the French government over the English does in fact afford me a degree of pleasure which it is very difficult to disguise.' Tourists streamed across the Channel to see what post-Revolutionary France was like: they found ruined churches and chateaux, and lots of soldiers. Politicians (eighty-two MPs and thirty-one peers) went in the hope of sizing up the charismatic Bonaparte. Dissenters identified him as God's latest instrument, in the words of one radical MP, 'the Great Man of the People of France, the Liberator of Europe'. Intellectuals admired him as a macho version of themselves. Fox found him rather a bore, yet praised him in the Commons as 'the most stupendous monument of human wisdom'."[160]

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Napoleon's global ambitions, writes Tombs, "explain why peace [with England] broke down after less than a year over the seemingly minor issue of Malta. Its inhabitants had requested British aid to expel the French. The Treaty of Amiens required Britain to evacuate the island. But Valetta's fortified Grand Harbour barred the way to Egypt and Asia, and the British stayed on. Negotiations came to nothing, and on 12 May 1803, after an ultimatum, Britain declared war. Ordinary people on both sides of the Channel were horrified, foreseeing years of hunger, taxation, conscription and impressment. Seamen sought safer jobs in coal mines and quarries. Landmen rioted when ballots for militia service were ordered. In France, men married elderly widows to gain exemption, chopped off their trigger fingers, or headed for the hills. Both countries faced a deadly war of attrition. British ministers were remarkably confident that France would crack first.

"The political climate in England changed. Many who had supported the revolution in 1789 had been disillusioned, and had even less sympathy for Bonaparte's dictatorship. One minister actually appealed in the Commons for support from English Jacobins, 'as men of spirit, of lovers of what they call liberty… [are they] content to be put under the yoke and crushed by France?' France's invasion of peaceful Switzerland in 1798 had already turned Wordsworth against the revolution, even if his endorsement of England's cause was distinctly grudging: 'O grief that Earth's best hopes rest all with Thee!' Many – including Wordsworth and Coleridge – took a grim pride that the country stood alone. Most Dissenting Congregations now supported a defensive war against a militaristic dictatorship…

"Like his predecessors in 1745, 1759 and 1779, the emperor Napoleon… decided on invasion: 'The Channel is a ditch which will be crossed when someone has the boldness to try it.' While still at peace he had started building 2,500 gunboats and landing craft, and he marshaled an Army of England of 165,000 men strung out between the Channel ports with its headquarters at Boulogne. He was confident that 'foggy weather and some luck will make me master of London, of parliament and of the Bank of England.'…

"Was invasion possible? Napoleon thought so: 'If we control the crossing for twelve hours, England is dead.' But some French naval officers feared that many of his overloaded landing craft would sink even without the intervention of the Royal Navy. In August 1805, Napoleon, Napoleon summoned his battle fleet up the Channel to cover the invasion, but his naval commander, Admiral

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[160] Tombs, op. cit., pp. 396-398.

Villeneuve, shied away from what he considered certain disaster, and later committed suicide. Napoleon angrily abandoned the invasion and marched his army off 'to fight England in Germany,' defeating the Austrians and the Russians with chilling efficiency at Ulm on 20 October and Austerlitz on 2 December. Meanwhile, on 21 October, the French and Spanish fleets were no less efficiently destroyed at Cape Trafalgar. This long remained in the forefront of national memory as the victory that decisively ended the recurring threat of invasion. England had expected that 'every man will do his duty', following the example given by its most charismatic sailor, Horatio Nelson, who gave his life and created a model hero for the age, combining audacity, vulnerability and pathos (and, though this was played down, a rather turbulent private life). Trafalgar was in reality a one-sided battle, as was now invariably the case when the totally dominant Royal Navy got to grips with its enemies, inferior in training, morale and physical health: two-thirds of the Franco-Spanish fleet of thirty-three ships of the line were captured or destroyed by the twenty-nine British at a cost of only 448 British lives. French casualties were appalling. The *Redoutable*, for example, battered by the larger *Victory* and two other ships, had 571 of her 643 crew killed or wounded. Of 15,000 Frenchmen engaged, only 4,000 escaped. Napoleon did not give up: he soon ordered the construction all over Europe of a massive fleet, with Antwerp chosen as the main base for future invasion…

"By the last decades of the century, England was safe from invasion for the first time in its history, and so it remained. The French in 1779 had shown that a major landing might still have been possible, but Napoleon's failure in 1805 showed that it no longer was. At the same time, the Royal Navy extended its dominance round the globe. Sailing fleets in distant seas required roomy, deep and sheltered anchorages, stores of spars, rope, sails and ammunition, and a large hinterland for fresh food and water. The British secured bases round the globe – Gibraltar, Malta, Halifax, Bermuda, Jamaica, Antigua, St. Helena, Capetown, Mauritius, Bombay, Calcutta, Sydney – making a constant naval presence possible. As France and its allies lost their bases, they lost the very possibility of naval action. Domination of the European seas and the ability to project invincible power across the oceans, and hence to exert pressure over the world's commercial and economic life, was the foundation of a power which no other state or combination of states would seriously challenge until the Fascist Axis of the Second World War.

"But direct British power stopped at the Channel and North Sea coasts: strategically and politically, the French dominated the Continent, and the British could do nothing in Europe without allies. When Napoleon signed the Treaty of Tilsit with defeated Russia in 1807, Britain was alone. But there remained economic warfare. Britain's economy was doing rather well out of the conflict. Since 1790 overseas trade had grown by nearly 60 percent, and colonial re-exports, mainly sugar and coffee, by 187 percent. Domestic demand was strong. Agriculture had increased the acreage under the plough. The City had received a flood of capital and people seeking security and become truly international: rival financial centres, notably Amsterdam and Frankfurt, have never caught up since. Britain's finances seemed able to withstand war indefinitely, and subsidize other countries willing to fight the French. The French resorted to the *guerre de course*, attacks on merchant shipping. This inflicted damage on British trade, but it could not defeat Britain, which lost only 2 percent of its merchant fleet during the Napoleonic Wars. The French themselves suffered far more: in 1803 they had 1,500 ocean-going merchant ships, but by 1812 only 179 – compared with Britain's 24,000. So Napoleon ordered a land blockade. In November 1806 his 'Berlin Decrees' prohibited all trade with Britain from France and its satellites, and ordered the seizure of all British merchandise. This 'Continental System' aimed to wreck British trade and increase that of France: 'England will end up weeping tears of blood'. London retaliated with Orders in Council in November 1807 forbidding any ship from any country to trade with Napoleonic Europe unless it first passed through a British port and paid a 25 percent duty."[161]

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[161] Tombs, op. cit., pp. 398-402, 405-406, 409-410.

10. NAPOLEON AND RELIGION

The Revolution, as we have seen, had already swept away all the complex structures of feudalism, thereby preparing the way for the totalitarian state. But Napoleon went further. Thus he abolished trade unions, introduced a standardized system of weights and measures, and a standardized system of education and legislation, the famous *Code Napoléon*. Everything, from religion and charity to economics and the government of friendly sister-republics, such as Holland, had to be controlled from the centre. And the centre was Napoleon.

Napoleon's attitude towards religion was on the one hand respectful and on the other hand manipulative and utilitarian. His respectfulness is revealed in the following perceptive remark: "There are only two forces in the world: the sword and the spirit; by spirit I mean the civil and religious institutions; in the long run the sword is always defeated by the spirit."[162] On the other hand, his essentially unbelieving, utilitarian attitude is revealed in the following: "I see in religion not the mystery of the Incarnation but the mystery of order in society".[163] "What is it that makes the poor man take it for granted that ten chimneys smoke in my palace while he dies of cold, that I have ten changes of raiment in my wardrobe while he is naked, that on my table at each meal there is enough to sustain a family for a week? It is religion, which says to him that in another life I shall be his equal, indeed that he has a better chance of being happy there than I have."[164]

In other words, religion was powerful, and as such had to be respected. But it was powerful not because it was true, but because it was a – perhaps *the* – major means of establishing order in society. More particularly, it was the major means of establishing obedience to *his*, Napoleon's rule. That is why, "As soon as I had power," he recalled in 1816, "I made it the groundwork and foundation upon which I built. I considered it as the support of sound principles and good morality, both in doctrine and in practice. Besides, such is the restlessness of man, that his mind requires that something undefined and marvelous which religion offers; and it is better for him to find it there, than to seek it of Cagliostro, of Mademoiselle Lenormand, or of the fortune-tellers and imposters."[165]

He would no doubt have preferred a heady kind of religion, such as the worship of himself as a god-king, but he recognized that those times had passed: "I have come too late; men are too enlightened; there is nothing great left to do… Look at Alexander: after he had conquered Asia and been proclaimed to the peoples as the son of Jupiter, the whole of the East believed it… with the exception of Aristotle and some Athenian pedants. Well, as for me, if I declared myself today the son of the eternal Father, there is no fishwife who would not hiss at me as I passed by…"[166]

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[162] Napoleon, in Vincent Cronin, *Napoleon*, London: HarperCollins, 1994, p. 202.
[163] Napoleon, in Cronin, op. cit., p. 211.
[164] Napoleon, in Gascoigne, op. cit., p. 216.
[165] Napoleon in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 532.

Instead of that, Napoleon issued an Imperial Catechism whose purpose was to "bind by religious sanctions the conscience of the people to the august person of the Emperor"[167]:

> ***Q**: Why are we bound in all these duties towards our Emperor?*
> ***A**: Because God… has made him the agent of His power on earth. Thus it is that to honour and serve our Emperor is to honour and serve God Himself.*[168]

Napoleon, writes Doyle, "never made the mistake of underestimating either the power of religion or the resilience of the Church. Under orders in the spring of 1796 to march on Rome to avenge the murder by a Roman mob of a French envoy, he was confronted by a Spanish emissary from the pontiff. 'I told him [the Spaniard reported], if you people take it into your heads to make the pope say the slightest thing against dogma or anything touching on it, you are deceiving yourselves, for he will never do it. You might, in revenge, sack, burn and destroy Rome, St. Peter's etc. but religion will remain standing in spite of your attacks. If all you wish is that the pope urge peace in general, and obedience to legitimate power, he will willingly do it. He appeared to me captivated by this reasoning…' Certainly he continued while in Italy to treat the Pope with more restraint than the Directory had ordered: and when, early the next year, the Cispadane Republic was established in territories largely taken from the Holy See, he advised its founders that: 'Everything is to be done by degrees and with gentleness. Religion is to be treated like property.' Devoid of any personal faith, in Egypt he even made parade of following Islam in the conviction that it would strengthen French rule. By the time he returned to Europe, it was clear that Pope Pius VI would not after all be the last…

"This approach bore one important fruit: in his Christmas sermon for 1797 the new Pope, Pius VII, declared that Christianity was not incompatible with democracy – a very major concession to the revolution that later Popes would take back.

"On his second entry into Milan, in June 1800, he convoked the city's clergy to the great cathedral, and declared, even before Marengo was fought: 'It is my firm intention that the Christian, Catholic and Roman religion shall be preserved in its entirety, that it shall be publicly performed… No society can exist without morality; there is no good morality without religion. It is religion alone, therefore, that gives to the State a firm and durable support…'"[169]

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[166] Napoleon, the day after his coronation, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 532.
[167] Napoleon, in Gascoigne, op. cit., p. 217.
[168] Napoleon, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 532.
[169] Doyle, op. cit., pp. 385-386.

Religious toleration was both in accordance with the ideals of democracy and politically expedient. Thus to the same clergy he said: "The people is sovereign; if it wants religion, respect its will." And to his own Council of State he said: "My policy is to govern men as the majority wish. That, I believe, is the way to recognize the sovereignty of the people. It was by becoming catholic that I ended the wars in the Vendée, it was by turning Mohammedan that I gained a hold in Egypt, it was by turning ultramontane that I won over people in Italy. If I were governing Jews, I should rebuild Solomon's temple."[170]

Napoleon's remark about gaining a hold in Egypt by turning Mohammedan was literally true. He "promised respect for the Islamic religion, even discussing with the leading *ulama* the terms on which a mass conversion of his army might be considered (circumcision proved a stumbling block)."[171]

It is in this astonishingly cynical attitude that Napoleon reveals his modernity, making him perhaps the closest forerunner to the Antichrist that had yet appeared on the stage of world history, closer even, in some ways, than Lenin or Stalin. For the Antichrist will not – at first – persecute religion; he will rather try to be the champion of *all* religions – in order to subdue them *all* to his will. And he will rebuild Solomon's temple…

Napoleon's first task in the religious sphere was to heal the breach between the Constitutional Church, which had accepted the revolution, and the non-jurors, who had rejected it. Only the non-jurors were recognised by the Pope, so an agreement had to be reached with Rome. Finally, on July 15, 1801, a Concordat was signed.

"This document," writes Cronin, "opens with a preamble describing Roman Catholicism as 'the religion of the great majority of the French people' and the religion professed by the consuls. Worship was to be free and public. The Pope, in agreement with the Government, was to re-map dioceses in such a way as to reduce their number by more than half to sixty. The holders of bishoprics were to resign and if they declined to do so, were to be replaced by the Pope. The First Consul was to appoint new bishops; the Pope was to invest them. The Government was to place at the disposal of bishops all the un-nationalized churches necessary for worship, and to pay bishops and curés a suitable salary.

"The Concordat was an up-to-date version of the old Concordat, which had regulated the Church in France for almost 300 years. But it was less Gallican; that is, it gave the French hierarchy less autonomy. Napoleon conceded to the Pope not only the power of investing bishops, which he had always enjoyed, but the right, in certain circumstances, to depose them, which was something new. Napoleon did this in order to be able to effect a clean sweep of bishops.

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[170] Cronin, op. cit., p. 212; Ivan Ilyin, "O Monarkhii i Respublikanstve" (On Monarchy and Republicanism), *Sobrannie Sochinenia* (Collected Works), Moscow, 1994, vol. 4, p. 492.

[171] John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Rise & Fall of Global Empires, 1400-2000,* London: Penguin Books, 2008, pp. 182-183.

"Napoleon did not discuss the Concordat beforehand with his Council of State. When he did show it to them they criticized it as insufficiently Gallican. The assemblies, they predicted, would never make it law unless certain riders were added. Finally seventy 'organic articles' were drawn up and added to the Concordat [without consulting the pope]. For example, all bulls from Rome were to be subject to the Government's *placet*, one of which asserted that the Pope must abide by the decisions of an ecumenical council…"[172]

In April, 1802, Napoleon reopened the churches in France, which proved to be one of his most popular measures (as he said, "It was by becoming catholic that I ended the wars in the Vendée"), and it enabled him to enlist the Church in support of his government – as did, of course, his coronation by the Pope. Moreover, notes Johnson, "by making peace with the Church, he prepared the way for a reconciliation with the old landowners and aristocrats who had been driven into exile by the Revolution, and whom he wanted back to provide further legitimacy to his regime."[173]

However, a group of French and Belgian Catholics, numbering at one time as much as 100,000 people, rejected the Concordat, forming the so-called *Petite Église* (Little Church).[174]

"Even while seeking the Church's support," writes Cronin, "Napoleon kept firmly to the principle that the temporal and spiritual are two separate realms, and had to be kept separate in France. He might easily have used his growing authority to subordinate the Church to the State, but although he was occasionally tempted to do so, he quickly drew back… Equally, Napoleon refrained from subordinating the State to the Church. When bishops urged him to shut all shops and cabarets on Sundays so that the faithful should not be enticed from Mass, Napoleon replied: 'The curé's power resides in exhortations from the pulpit and in the confessional; police spies and prisons are bad ways of trying to restore religious practices.'"[175]

However, while Napoleon wanted the Church to flourish, it could do so only under the general control of the State. This was made abundantly clear at his coronation in 1804, when instead of allowing the Pope to crown him, he took the crown from his hands and crowned himself![176] "For the pope's purposes," he said to Cardinal Fesch, "I am Charlemagne… I therefore expect the pope to accommodate his conduct to my requirements. If he behaves well I shall make no outward changes; if not, I shall reduce him to the status of bishop of Rome… "[177]

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[172] Cronin, op. cit., pp. 216-217.

[173] Johnson, op. cit., p. 48.

[174] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petite_%C3%89glise

[175] Cronin, op. cit., p. 220.

[176] Again, there is a resemblance to Cromwell. "It was said that, in bringing to an end to 'Barebone's Parliament', Cromwell took the crown from Christ and put it on his own head" (Peter Ackroyd, *The History of England,* vol. III, Civil War, London: Macmillan, 2014, p. 333).

Not for nothing did Napoleon say: "If I were not me, I would like to be Gregory VII".[178] Gregory had secularized the papacy by making it into a secular kingdom. Napoleon had done the same from the opposite direction…

However, the pope continued to put up a resistance. "As part of his war with England, Napoleon wanted the pope to submit to the obligations of the continental blockade: the ban on trade with England and her allies. The pope refused, and the situation deteriorated. In 1808 Rome was occupied by French troops. In May 1809 the Papal States were reunited with the French empire. The pope excommunicated the usurpers.[179] On 6 July the pope was put under house arrest at Savona (near Genoa) until March 1812. The bull of excommunication was published in France despite the police. Pius VII then refused to consecrate the bishops nominated by Napoleon and there were soon seventeen dioceses without a bishop. So that he could marry Maria Theresa of Austria, Napoleon obtained an annulment of his marriage with Josephine from the religious authorities in Paris, who were cooperative. The Roman cardinals who were in Paris refused to attend the wedding, which took place in 1810.

"In order to get out of the impasse caused by having dioceses without bishops, Napoleon summoned a national council in Paris in 1811. The bishops affirmed their loyalty to the pope but did not want to incur the emperor's displeasure, and undertook to win over Pius VII. However, he would not give way. Napoleon had him taken to Fontainebleu in June 1812. When subjected to force the pope made some concessions (the Concordat of Fontainebleu) which he very quickly went back on. Military disasters led the emperor to send the pope to Rome, where he made a triumphal entrance on 24 May 1814."[180]

Thus in the French, as in the English revolution, the established Church survived the Revolution. The restoration of one-man-rule under Napoleon went hand-in-hand with the restoration of the Church, if not to a position of independence, still less of real “symphony” with the State, at any rate of greater influence than during the 1790s. (We see the same process in contemporary Russia under Putin.) In the longer term, however, the Catholic Church’s authority and influence continued to decline…

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[177] Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 532.

[178] Peter de Rosa, *Vicars of Christ* London: Bantam Press, 1988, p. 68.

[179] When Napoleon removed the pope from his status as temporal ruler (in exchange for a handsome salary), he said to him: "Our Lord Jesus Christ," he said, "although a descendant of David, did not want an earthly kingdom…" Pius then excommunicated Napoleon for his "blasphemy" and refused to invest his nominees to vacant bishoprics.

In 1811 Monsieur Emery, the director of Saint-Sulpice, defended the Pope, reminding Napoleon "that God had given the Pope spiritual power over all Christians. 'But not temporal power,' objected Napoleon. 'Charlemagne gave him that, and I, as Charlemagne's successor, intended to relieve him of it. What do you think of that, Monsieur Emery?' 'Sire, exactly what Bossuet thought. In his *Declaration du clergé de France* he says that he congratulates not only the Roman Church but the Universal Church on the Pope's temporal sovereignty because, being independent, he can more easily exercise his functions as father of all the faithful.' Napoleon replied that what was true for Bossuet's day did not apply in 1811, when western Europe was ruled by one man, not disputed by several" (Cronin, op. cit., pp. 220-223) (V.M.)

[180] Comby, op. cit., p. 119.

11. NAPOLEON THE MAN-GOD

What was it about this man that caused even Fox, who had fought against him for years, to adore him as "the most stupendous monument of human wisdom"?!

That Napoleon was a man of astonishing energy who from a secular point of view achieved great things – and not only on the battlefield – is undeniable. Napoleon's primary significance may be seen in his having spread the ideas of the Enlightenment throughout Europe. Andrew Roberts writes: "Goethe himself said that Napoleon was 'always enlightened by reason… He was in a permanent state of enlightenment'. A child of the Enlightenment who became an exponent of the rationalism of Rousseau and Voltaire as a youth, Napoleon believed that Europeans were on the cusp of the most important scientific and cultural developments since the Renaissance. His correspondence with astronomers, chemists, mathematicians and biologists expressed a respect for their work to be expected from a member of the Institut, the headquarters of the French Enlightenment of which he was so proud to have been elected a member."[181]

As Marr writes, his greatest civil achievement "was the French legal code, or Code Napoléon, a radical simplification and rationalization of old laws, producing a single coherent system, it reshaped France and was influential across the continent. At its height the Napoleonic Empire would reach as far as the Duchy of Warsaw, the tip of Italy and the Balkans, stripping away old aristocratic rights, ending religious discrimination – including against the Jews – and spreading its new laws and the metric system."[182]

But what good he may have done was far outweighed by the evil – the evil of a true forerunner of the Antichrist… The Holy Fathers teach that the Antichrist will come at a time of anarchy, which he will use in order to consolidate his power, presenting himself to the world as its saviour. Napoleon, as "the forerunner of the Antichrist", as the Russian Holy Synod proclaimed him in 1806, came to power at just such a period… Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the French revolution appeared to have lost its way, consumed by poverty, corruption and both civil and international war. It was saved, as Edmund Burke had predicted, by a "popular general" - Napoleon Bonaparte. He was as sincerely faithful to the spirit of the French revolution as Cromwell had been to the spirit of the English revolution. Madame de Stael called him Robespierre on horseback. After all, he came from Corsica, which in 1755 had successfully rebelled from Genoa, and for which Rousseau had written one of his most seminal works, *Project de constitution pour la Corse,* in 1765. But, like Cromwell (and Caesar), Napoleon found that in order to "save" the republic he had to take control of it and rule it like the most despotic of kings.

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[181] Roberts, "Why Napoleon Merits the Title 'the Great'", *BBC History Magazine,* November, 2014, pp. 36-38.

[182] Marr, op. cit., p. 370.

Napoleon even made himself emperor in May, 1804, declaring that "Napoleon Bonaparte, at present First Consul of the Republic, is Emperor of the French", and that "the Imperial dignity is hereditary". In a plebiscite on the latter clause only, more than three million votes were received in favour (99.3%), with only three thousand (0.07%) against. Then, on December 2, having persuaded the unwilling Pope to cross the Alps, at a lavish ceremony in Notre Dame, Napoleon "kept the Pope and congregation waiting for a full hour and then personally performed the actual crowning, first of himself and then of Josephine. Pius was allowed to bless the two crowns, but that was all: for the rest, he was relegated to the role of a simple spectator. In David's great painting of the occasion the papal displeasure is only too obvious."[183] "The imperial couple sat enthroned through the Mass – Napoleon not taking communion – before returning to the Tuileries past cheering crowds."[184]

This coronation tells us much both about Napoleon and about political power in general. On the one hand, Napoleon was already in complete control of France and his empire – he did not need the confirmation of a church service. Moreover, as the heir and consummation of the anti-monarchist and anti-ecclesiastical revolution, with the democratic mandate of the plebiscite behind him, participation in such a service was, from a revolutionary point of view, not only superfluous but even blasphemous (or, if "blasphemy" is too religious a term to describe it, "counter-revolutionary" or "reactionary"). And yet, like many a despot before and after him, he needed the religious mandate that meant so much to so many of his stubbornly unenlightened and still-believing subjects. Moreover, even for a revolutionary ruler, for whom Year I of world history began only in 1792, a connection with tradition and history – a history that went back over a thousand years to Charlemagne, and even further back to Clovis, a history from which the ideas of God, kingship and empire were inseparable - was somehow necessary. Man is a religious, even a monarchist animal by nature, and even the most powerful of tyrants has to take that into account.

Under Napoleon, in Davies' phrase, "a pseudo-monarchy headed pseudo-democratic institutions."[185] The contradictoriness of it was illustrated by French coinage of the time that bore the phrase: *République Française – Napoléon empéreur.*[186] Caesar and Cromwell had eschewed the trappings of monarchy, but Napoleon embraced them avidly. Monarchy was back in favour: "Earlier than is generally thought," writes Philip Mansel, "the First Consul Bonaparte aligned himself with this monarchical trend, acquiring in succession a guard (1799), a palace (1800), court receptions and costumes (1800-02), a household (1802-04), a dynasty (1804), finally a nobility (1808)… The proclamation of the empire in May 1804, the establishment of the households of the Emperor, the Empress and the

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[183] Norwich, op. cit., p. 239.

[184] Richard Cavendish, "Napoleon is Crowned Emperor of he French", *History Today*, December, 2004, p. 52.

[185] Davies, op. cit., p. 701.

[186] Simms, op. cit., p. 161.

Imperial Family in July, the coronation by the pope in December of that year, were confirmations of an existing monarchical reality."[187]

At the same time, as J.M. Roberts writes, while Napoleon reinstituted monarchy, "it was in no sense a restoration. Indeed, he took care so to affront the exiled Bourbon family that any reconciliation with it was inconceivable. He sought popular approval for the empire in a plebiscite and got it.[188] "This was a monarchy Frenchmen had voted for; it rested on popular sovereignty, that is, the Revolution. It assumed the consolidation of the Revolution which the Consulate had already begun. All the great institutional reforms of the 1790s were confirmed or at least left intact; there was no disturbance of the land sales which had followed the confiscation of Church property, no resurrection of the old corporations, no questioning of the principle of equality before the law. Some measures were even taken further, notably when each department was given an administrative head, the prefect, who was in his powers something like one of the emergency emissaries of the Terror…"[189]

Napoleon spread his brand of monarchy throughout French-ruled Europe. First, his own empire replaced the Holy Roman Empire, which dissolved itself in 1806, as the "super-monarchy" of Europe. Then the kingdoms and Grand Duchies of Italy, Venice, Rome, Naples, Lucca, Dubrovnik, Holland, Mainz, Bavaria, Württemburg, Saxony, Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, Westphalia and Spain were all established or re-established - and all ruled by Napoleon's relations by blood or marriage. As Simon Winder writes, "many bishops, knights, dukes, abbesses and petty oligarchs lost out, but others cleverly adapted. There is a funny painting of the young Elector of Bavaria, Maximilian IV Joseph, all dolled up in his wig and jewels, the acme of rococo flummery, which can be contrasted with the surprisingly different painting of him as the brand new (from 1806) *King* of Bavaria. Maximilian I, thanks to Napoleon, sporting his own hair, cut short and severe, and dressed in a dark blue, almost undecorated uniform, faking the stern mien of the simple soldier. This sort of graceless rebranding was going on everywhere."[190]

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"The problem," writes Niall Ferguson, "was that no matter how much he wrapped himself in the trappings of legitimate rule, appropriating Egyptian, Roman and Habsburg regalia and iconography, Napoleon could never achieve the one thing on which hierarchical systems of rule depend (and insist upon): *legitimacy*."[191] Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow called him a "not-born-in-the-purple" (*neporfirorodnij*) – in other words, illegitimate – emperor. He destroyed legitimacy rather than restore it, destroying kingdoms in one place only to build others elsewhere.[192]

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[187] Mansel, "Napoleon the Kingmaker", *History Today*, vol. 48 (3), March, 1998, pp. 40, 41.

[188] The result of the plebiscite was 3,571,329 'yes' votes to 2,570 'noes'. As Johnson points out, "Bonaparte was the first dictator to produce faction figures." (op. cit., pp. 49-50). (V.M.)

[189] Roberts, *History of the World,* Oxford: Helicon, 1996, pp. 589-590.

[190] Winder, *Danubia,* London: Picador, 2013, p. 300.

[191] Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower,* London: Penguin, 2018, p. 128.

According to the novelist Stendhal, Napoleon's court "totally corrupted" him "and exalted his *amour propre* to the state of a disease… He was on the point of making Europe one vast monarchy."[193] "'The French empire shall become the metropolitan of all other sovereignties,' Napoleon once said to a friend. 'I want to force every king in Europe to build a large palace for his use in Paris. When an Emperor of the French is crowned, these kings shall come to Paris, and they shall adorn that imposing ceremony with their presence and salute it with their homage.'"[194]

"As one of his secretaries Baron Meneval wrote, he saw himself as 'the pillar of royalty in Europe'. On January 18th, 1813, he wrote to his brother Jerome that his enemies, by appealing to popular feeling, represented 'upheavals and revolutions… pernicious doctrines.' In Napoleon's opinion his fellow monarchs were traitors to 'their own cause' when in 1813 they began to desert the French Empire, or in 1814 refused to accept his territorial terms for peace…"[195]

Thus Napoleon represents in his own person the clearest demonstration of the inner relationship between democracy and despotism. He came to power as a supporter of the revolution, and there was a liberal stamp to his legislation. He often held plebiscites, that instrument of liberal democracy – but regularly rigged them, which is a characteristic of despots. For if the revolution means power to and from the people, it can just as well mean power to one man representing the people. The deification *of* the people naturally leads to the deification of one man *from* the people. What it cannot mean is power coming from God or the Church. This was symbolized above all by Napoleon's coronation in 1804. Unlike Charlemagne one thousand years earlier, who allowed himself to be crowned by the Pope, Napoleon took the crown out of the Pope's hands and crowned himself. In other words, he did not know his power or legitimacy to anyone or anything except himself…

However, this did not prevent him *pretending* to have received the crown from the people. "I have not at all usurped the crown," he said. "I picked it up from the gutter. The people put it on my head. We have to respect its acts!"[196]

Jocelyn Hunt writes: "Kings before 1791 were said to be absolute but were limited by all kinds of constraints and controls. The Church had an almost autonomous status. Bonaparte ensured that the Church was merely a branch of the civil service. Kings were anointed by the Church, and thus owed their authority to God: Bonaparte took power through his own strength, camouflaged as 'the General Will' which, as Correlli Barnett acidly remarks, 'became synonymous with General Bonaparte'…[197]

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[192] *Gosudarstvennoe Uchenie Filareta, Mitropolita Moskovskogo* (The State Teaching of Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1997, p. 30.

[193] Stendhal, in Mansel, op. cit., p. 43.

[194] Adam Zamoyski, *1812: Napoleon's Fatal March on Moscow,* London: Harper, 2004, p. 9.

[195] Mansel, op. cit., p. 43.

[196] Napoleon, quoted by Ivan Ilyin, "O Monarkhii i Respublike" (On the Monarchy and the Republic), *Sobranie Sochinenij* (Collected Works), Moscow, 1994, vol. 4, p. 429.

"The First Consul's choice of ministers was a far more personal one than had been possible for the kings of France. Bonaparte established a system of meeting his ministers individually, in order to give his instructions. In the same way, Bonaparte chose which 'ordinary' citizens he would consult; kings of France had mechanisms for consulting 'the people' but these had fallen into disuse and thus, when the Estates General met in 1789, the effect was revolutionary. Bonaparte's legislative body was, until 1814, submissive and compliant.…

"Police control and limitations on personal freedom had been a focus of condemnation by the Philosophes before the Revolution, but had not been entirely efficient: a whole industry of importing and distributing banned texts had flourished in the 1770s and 1780s. Bonaparte's police were more thorough, and so swingeing were the penalties that self-censorship rapidly became the safest path for a newspaper to take. Bonaparte closed down sixty of the seventy-three newspapers in Paris in January, 1800, and had a weekly summary prepared of all printed material, but he was soon able to tell his Chief of Police, Fouché, 'They only print what I want them to.'[198] In the same way, the hated *lettres de cachet* appear limited and inefficient when compared to Bonaparte's and Fouché's record of police spies, trials without jury and imprisonment without trial. Bonaparte's brief experience as a Jacobin leader in Ajaccio had taught him how to recognise, and deal with, potential opponents.[199]

"The judiciary had stood apart from the kings of the *ancien régime*: while the King was nominally the supreme Judge, the training of lawyers and judges had been a matter for the Parlements, with their inherent privileges and mechanisms. The Parlements decided whether the King's laws were acceptable within the fundamental laws of France. Under the Consulate, there were no such constraints on the legislator. The judges were his appointees, and held office entirely at his pleasure; the courts disposed of those who opposed or questioned the government, far more rapidly that had been possible in the reign of Louis

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[197] Johnson writes: "He liked the vague and abstract notion of Rousseau's concept, the General Will, offering a ruling elite that knew its business the opportunity to harness the people to a national effort without any of the risks of democracy. In practice an elite always formed itself into a pyramid, with one man at its summit. His will expressed the General Will… and gave it decisiveness, the basis for action. Constitutions were important in the sense that window-dressing was important in a shop. But the will was the product to be sold to the nation and, once sold, imposed" (op. cit, p. 17). (V.M.)

[198] As he said to Metternich: "You see me master of France; well, I would not undertake to govern her for three months with liberty of the press" (Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 530). (V.M.)

[199] Johnson writes: "Fouché, who operated the world's first secret police force, and who was the prototype of Himmler or Beria, was an important element in Bonaparte's legacy of evil, for some of his methods were widely imitated in Austria and Prussia, where they became permanent, and even in harmless Sweden, where they were carried out by Bonaparte's marshal Jean-Baptiste Bernadotte" (op. cit., p. 105). (V.M.)

XVI. Imprisonment and deportation became regularly used instruments of control under Bonaparte.

"Kings of France were fathers to their people and had a sense of duty and service. Bonaparte, too, believed that he was essential to the good and glory of France, but was able to make his own decisions about what constituted the good of France in a way which was not open to the king. Finally, while the monarchy of France was hereditary and permanent, and the position of First Consul was supposed to be held for ten years, Bonaparte's strength was demonstrated when he changed his own constitution, first to give him the role for life and then to become a hereditary monarch. All in all, no monarch of the *ancien régime* had anything approaching the power which Bonaparte had been permitted to take for himself…

"When a Royalist bomb plot was uncovered in December, 1800, Bonaparte seized the opportunity to blame it on the Jacobins, and many were guillotined, with over a hundred more being exiled or imprisoned. The regime of the Terror had operated in similar ways to remove large numbers of potential or actual opponents. Press censorship and the use of police spies ensured that anti-government opinions were not publicly aired. The Declaration of the Rights of Man had guaranteed freedom of expression; but this freedom had already been eroded before Bonaparte's coup. The Terror had seen both moral and political censorship, and the Directory had on several occasions exercised its constitutional right to censor the press. Bonaparte appears merely to have been more efficient…

"Bonaparte certainly held power without consulting the French people; he took away many of the freedoms they had been guaranteed in 1789; he taxed them more heavily than they had been taxed before. [In 1803 he wrote: 'I haven't been able to understand yet what good there is in an opposition. Whatever it may say, its only result is to diminish the prestige of authority in the eyes of the people'."[200]

In 1806, writes Simon Jenkins, he "established a 'continental system' of European customs controls, aimed at excluding British goods from continental markets. In an intriguing premonition of the twentieth-century European Union, he announced, 'There is not enough sameness among the nations of Europe'. There should be a single dominant power 'with enough authority to force [the nations] to live in harmony with one another'. That power should, of course, be France…"[201]

As Schroeder put it, the decade of Napoleonic hegemony in Europe was an exercise in European colonization…[202]

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[200] Hunt, op. cit., pp. 104, 105-106, 107, 108, 112.

[201] Jenkins, *A Short History of Europe,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2018, p. 188.

[202] Schroeder, in Philip Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles,* London: Penguin, 2002, p. 176.

However, writes Adam Zamoyski, "it was not so much a matter of France 'über alles'. 'European society needs a regeneration,' Napoleon asserted in conversation in 1805. 'There must be a superior power which dominates all the other powers, with enough authority to force them to live in harmony with one another – and France is the best placed for that purpose.' He was, like many a tyrant, utopian in his ambitions. 'We must have a European legal system, a European appeal court, a common currency, the same weights and measures the same laws,' Napoleon once said to [his chief of police] Joseph Fouché: 'I must make of all the peoples of Europe one people, and of Paris the capital of the world.'"[203] And yet "at bottom," as Johnson notes, "Bonaparte despised the French, or perhaps it would be more exact to say the Parisians, the heart of the 'political nation'. He thought of them, on the basis of his experience during the various phases of the Revolution, as essentially frivolous."[204]

So Napoleon was undoubtedly a despot, but a despot who could claim many precedents for his despotism in the behaviour of the Jacobins and Directory. And if he was not faithful to the forms of the revolution in its early phase, replacing democracy (of a despotic kind) with monarchy (of a populist kind), he nevertheless remained faithful to its fundamental principles - the principle, on the one hand, that nobody and nothing should be independent of the State (the principle of totalitarianism), and on the other, the principle that the Nation was the supreme value, and serving and dying for the Nation - the supreme glory.

The territorial states of the eighteenth century fought limited wars, and formed a balance of power to prevent the emergence of any hegemonic power. Since their primary motive was commerce, and since commerce is advanced by peace, they aimed to avoid wars by calculated concessions and adjustments. But Napoleon reverted to the absolutist tradition of Louis XIV, aiming at complete dominance of his neighbours. The basis of his power was therefore no kind of right, dynastic or otherwise, but *might.* He came to power through military might and retained only so long as he continued to win wars.

As Bernard Cornwell writes, Napoleon "was a superb administrator, but that was not how he wanted to be remembered. Above all, he was a warlord. His idol was Alexander the Great. In the middle of the nineteenth century, in the American Civil War. Robert E. Lee, the great Confederate General, watched his troops executing a brilliant and battle-winning maneuver and said, memorably, 'It is well that war is so terrible, or we should grow too fond of it.' Napoleon had grown too fond of it, he loved war. Perhaps it was his first love, because it combined the excitement of supreme risk with the joy of victory. He had the incisive mind of a great strategist, yet when the marching was done and the enemy outflanked he still demanded enormous sacrifices of his men. After Austerlitz, when one of his generals lamented the French lying dead on that frozen battlefield, the Emperor retorted that 'the women of Paris can replace those men in one night'.[205] When Metternich, the clever Austrian Foreign Minister, offered Napoleon honourable peace terms in 1813 and reminded the Emperor of the human cost of refusal, he received the scornful answer that Napoleon would happily sacrifice a million to gain his ambitions. Napoleon was careless about the lives of his troops, yet his soldiers adored him because he had the common touch. He knew how to speak to them, how to jest with them and how to inspire them. His soldiers might adore him, but his generals feared him. Marshal Augereau, a foul-mouthed disciplinarian, said, 'This little bastard of a general scares me!', and General Vandamme, a hard man, said he 'trembled like a child' when he approached Napoleon. Yet Napoleon led them all to glory. That was his drug, *la Gloire!* And in search of it he broke peace treaty after peace treaty, and his armies marched beneath their Eagle standards from Madrid to Moscow, from the Baltic to the Red Sea. He astonished Europe with victories like Austerlitz and Friedland, but he also led his *Grande Armée* to disaster in the Russian snow. Even his defeats were on a gargantuan scale…"[206]

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[203] Zamoyski, *1812,* p. 9.

[204] Johnson, op. cit., p. 119.

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The truth is, therefore, that it was neither the State nor the Nation that Bonaparte exalted above all, – although he greatly increased the worship of both in later European history, – but *himself*. So the spirit that truly reigned in the Napoleonic era can most accurately be described as the spirit of the man-god, of the Antichrist, of whom Bonaparte himself was a forerunner.

As Tsaritsa Elizabeth wrote to her mother when her husband, Tsar Alexander I, was still under Napoleon's spell: "You know, Mamma, this man seems to me like an irresistible seducer who by temptation or force succeeds in stealing the hearts of his victims. Russia, the most virtuous of them, has defended herself for a long time; but she has ended up no better than the others. And, in the person of her Emperor, she has yielded as much to charm as to force. He [Alexander] feels a secret attraction to his enticer which is apparent in all he does. I should indeed like to know what magic it is that he [Napoleon] employs to change people's opinions so suddenly and so completely…"[207]

This antichristian, seductive quality comes out also in Madame De Staël's characterization: "I had the disturbing feeling that no emotion of the heart could ever reach him. He regards a human being like a fact or a thing, never as an equal person like himself. He neither hates nor loves... The force of his will resides in the imperturbable calculations of his egotism. He is a chess-master whose opponents happen to be the rest of humanity... Neither pity nor attraction, nor religion nor attachment would ever divert him from his ends... I felt in his soul cold steel, I felt in his mind a deep irony against which nothing great or good, even his own destiny, was proof; for he despised the nation which he intended to govern, and no spark of enthusiasm was mingled with his desire to astound the human race..."[208]

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[205] In this he was very different from Wellington, who hated war and wept over the deaths of his soldiers. (V.M.)
[206] Cornwell, *Waterloo,* London: William Collins, 2014, p. 23.
[207] Quoted in Palmer, op. cit., p. 148.

Hegel also saw this antichristian, man-god quality. Just before the Battle of Jena in 1806, he saw Napoleon riding out to reconnoiter the battlefield, and wrote: "I saw the Emperor – this world-soul – riding out of the city on reconnaissance. It is indeed a wonderful sensation to see such an individual who, concentrated here at a single point, astride a horse, reaches out over the world and masters it."

This is the nub of it: a "world-soul", such as Napoleon or Hitler or Stalin, has to conquer the whole world. The mastery of one nation, even the greatest, will not satisfy him. In order to affirm and justify his quasi-divine essence, he has to compel the assent and/or worship of all men. In fact, he has to become not only *a* man-god, but *the* Antichrist, the ruler of the world. And since, as Dostoyevsky pointed out, universal brotherhood in the worship of one man is the innermost desire of all men, then those who do not worship the one true God, the God who became man, will inevitably worship the man who aspires to be god.

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[208] De Staël, in Johnson, op. cit., p. 119.

12. FROM SALAMANCA TO WATERLOO

However, the man-god was shown to be neither invincible nor immortal. For of him, as of all despots, it is written: "Like men ye die, and like one of the rulers do ye fall" (Psalm 81.9)…

"Napoleon's Continental System," writes Tombs, "required control of the whole European coastline to try to exclude British imports. But the result was vast organized smuggling to supply Europe's insatiable appetite for tobacco, cotton cloth, sugar, coffee, tea, chocolate, spices and manufactures. France's customs revenue collapsed. To close off access, Napoleon tried to take over Portugal and Spain in 1807-08, provoking resistance in both countries, notably the 2 May uprising in Madrid, immortalized by Goya's painting. Despite Whig opposition, Britain gave swift financial, naval and military assistance, eventually under the highly capable control of the indomitable Arthur Wellesley, later Duke of Wellington, dismissed by Napoleon as the 'sepoy general' as he had gained his military experience in India. The peninsula was reduced to bloody chaos, becoming in Napoleon's phrase an 'ulcer' sapping French strength. Perhaps twice as many of his soldiers would die there as in the disastrous invasion of Russia in 1812. For the first time since Marlborough, Britain exerted significant military power on the Continent, and five years of hard campaigning created an army eventually as good as the French. It was a very British army: only 20 percent were English, and there were large Irish and Scottish contingents. But it was at first small – around 30,000 men – and depended on Spanish and Portuguese allies to divide enemy strength by constant guerrilla warfare. This enabled Wellington to sally forth in 1809 from his base in Portugal, where he was supplied by the navy, retreat back to it in 1810 when the French mustered superior forces, and then mount decisive advances into Spain in 1812 and 1813. The British army was, to put it mildly, hard-bitten, and it acquired a fearsome reputation for drunkenness, looting and rape. Fortunately, Wellington and his staff were capable administrators and usually maintained adequate supplies, because, as the adjutant general put it, 'A British army on short commons is no easy thing to govern… heroic in action… when he is well fed, but in retreat where subsistence is short, [our soldier] becomes cross, unmanageable and too much disposed to give the thing up.' Some of its men were, in Wellington's words, the scum of the earth, but it also included adventurous or patriotic men of some education, whose letters and diaries left some of the earliest pictures of everyday campaigning. Victories in the peninsula, including at Talavera, Salamanca and Vitoria, raised the status of both the army and the aristocracy in public eyes.

"Once Britain was their ally, exports to Portugal, Spain and their South American colonies increased. Yet English textile industries were still inevitably affected by the barriers to trade imposed by the Continental System, and a peace campaign again drew support. As in the 1790s, it fed off economic distress, on a belief, strongest among the Dissenters, that the war was futile and immoral, and of lingering admiration for the revolution and Napoleon. The crisis years were

1811-1812, when bad weather ravaged harvests, further damaging the economy and government finances. Weavers, knitters and croppers in Lancashire, Nottinghamshire and Yorkshire, symbolically led by the folklore 'Ned Ludd', began selective breaking of new machinery, which was threatening their jobs. They were violently opposed by employers. Pitched battles took place. Thousands of troops were deployed. Some subsequent historians have seen this as an insurrection with revolutionary potential…

"… Disputes with the United States about its trade with Napoleonic Europe led to an American attack in July 1812 and continual naval skirmishing. An invasion of Canada was beaten off by a British-Shawnee alliance. A small British force of 3,700 landed on American soil and burned Washington. The Americans made peace in 1814, but fighting continued for some time before the news arrived, and another small British force was defeated at New Orleans.

"Napoleon's characteristically reckless invasion of Russia in 1812 because it refused to 'act as my second in my duel with England', and in which his Grand Army of 220,000 was almost annihilated by Russian resistance, disease and weather, marked the beginning of the end of his brilliant and destructive career. Allies abandoned him and defeated enemies resumed the struggle, now fuelled by unprecedented amounts of British money. This was made possible by the new income tax, by trade with India and North and South America, by taxes levied in India, and by selling government bonds abroad. Money and weapons flooded onto the Continent: within a year £10m and a million muskets were distributed among thirty countries from Denmark to Sicily at around £1 per soldier per month – still vastly less than British armies cost. Russia, Prussia and Austria were enabled to field 700,000 men. Between 16 and 19 October 1813, the multi-national armies clashed at Leipzig, the 'Battle of the Nations', the biggest and bloodiest battle before the First World War. The French alone lost 60,000 men, and were forced to withdraw from Germany.

"Britain's involvement in Europe was now more than merely financial. Many Europeans believed that Britain was indifferent to their sufferings while it made money; 'we must not hide the fact from ourselves,' wrote a British minister, George Canning, 'we are hated throughout Europe.' Viscount Castlereagh, Foreign Secretary from 1812, wanted to show that Britain was no longer willing to leave the Continent in flames while it amassed colonial conquests and trading profits. This required more generous cash handouts. Castlereagh, moreover, built a partnership to guarantee a more secure Europe after Napoleon's defeat. He persuaded the allies to pledge peace for twenty years – 'a systematic pledge of preserving concert among the leading Powers', he wrote, and 'a refuge under which all the minor states… may look forward to find their security.'

"Allied armies converged on France in later 1813 and early 1814 and support for Napoleon dissolved. Wellington's army, now 100,000 strong, crossed the Pyrenees and were welcomed as liberators – not least because on Wellington's strict orders they paid hard cash for supplies, and he backed up those orders with the lash and the noose… Napoleon's faithful Marshal Soult, still trying to resist Wellington's advance, 'was ashamed… that a town of 100,000 souls [Bourdeaux] could get away with refusing to be defended and should greet a few thousand Englishmen with acclamation.' He met the same problem at Toulouse: 'Practically the whole city is against being defended.' But defend it he did, and the battle of Toulouse on 10 April 1814 was the last real battle in the south, costing 4,500 Allied casualties and 2,700 French. Soult marched away unpursued, and the British were greeted by the mayor, a band, and a crowd of citizens who gave them a banquet. Napoleon had already abdicated on 6 April. On the initiative on Tsar Alexander I, the ex-emperor was given as compensation the island principality of Elba, off the Italian coast…"[209]

"On September 13 1814," writes Montefiore, "Alexander was greeted by Emperor Francis outside Vienna, where in perhaps the most self-indulgent international junket of all history, a congress of two emperors, five kings, 209 reigning princes, about 20,000 officials, from marshals and ministers to clerks and spies, and just about every gold-digger, mountebank and prostitute in Europe, maybe 100,000 in all, bargained, blackmailed and fornicated their way through banquets and balls, to reshape a continent after twenty years of war..."

In spite of all that, the peace achieved at the Congress was "a sensible, pragmatic settlement, much more enduring than its twentieth-century equivalent, the unrealistic and idealistic Treaty of Versailles of 1919…"[210]

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However, as Sir Richard Evans writes, "before the victorious European powers could get very far in drawing a line under the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic past, they were confronted by the sudden return of Napoleon from his enforced exile… The restored French monarchy under Louis XVIII (1755-1824), brother of the executed Louis XVI (1754-93), had run into trouble almost immediately, overwhelmed by the need to pay for the legacy of the war. It retained the unpopular taxes imposed by Napoleon, imposed cutbacks in expenditure on the army, and re-imposed censorship after decades of impassioned debate. The proclamation of a militant Catholicism as the state religion alienated many educated Frenchmen. There were widespread fears that the king would try to restore lands confiscated by the Revolution to their original clerical and aristocratic owners. Napoleon's return thus triggered an outburst of popular sentiment in favour of preserving the legacy of the Revolution. 'The people of the countryside,' reported a local official in central France, 'are manifesting an extraordinary sense of enthusiasm [for Napoleon]; fires are lit every evening on elevated positions, and there are public celebrations in many communes.' And, he concluded, 'It is commonly asserted that if the emperor had not returned to put the aristocrats in their place they would have been massacred by the peasants.'

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[209] Tombs, op. cit., pp. 411-412,412-414.

[210] Montefiore, *The Romanovs,* pp. 318,321-322.

"Such outbursts, compounded by demonstrations of support from Parisian workers, alienated many bourgeois notables, and the former emperor faced serious hostility among the clergy. In areas such as the Vendée, the Midi and Brittany, traditionally favourable to the royalists, he was unable to win much support. It was above all among his former soldiers, angered by the mass dismissals and economic measures imposed by the restored monarchy, that Napoleon was popular. 'I only have the people and the Army up to captain level for me,' he remarked. 'The rest are scared of me but I cannot rely on them.' His arrival exposed the deep divisions in French society left by a quarter of a century of revolutionary change. However, within weeks of landing in France on 1 March 1815, he was able to muster 100,000 men, as the provincial administrators, mostly appointed by him, did their job of recruitment as before, and veterans rallied to the imperial flag. Breaking off their peace negotiations, the Allies acted swiftly, fearing that if he remained in power the ex-emperor would quickly resume his career of conquest and the pursuit of glory. Within a few weeks they too managed to raise a formidable military force, consisting of 112,000 British, Dutch and German troops under Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (1769-1852). They held back Napoleon's army at the village of Waterloo on 18 June 1815 until 116,000 Prussians under the veteran General Lebrecht von Blücher (1742-1819), whom Napoleon wrongly thought he had disposed of at the Battle of Ligny two days before, arrived at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. Blücher rescued the British and joined with them in a final assault that drove the French from the battlefield."[211]

"With darkness falling, the emperor's carriage was captured by the Prussians and his diamonds later incorporated in the Prussian crown jewels.

"Napoleon's defeat was final. He wrote to George III, 'I have terminated my political career… I claim from your Royal Highness the protection of the laws, and throw myself upon the most powerful, the most constant, and the most generous of my enemies.' He hoped to escape to America, the nation that had inspired the revolution of which he was the beneficiary. But he was captured and sent for the remaining six year of his life to the isolated south Atlantic island of St. Helena, where he did in 1821. Britain's second hundred years war with France was over…"[212]

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"Napoleon left behind a political legend that quickly developed into a potent myth among liberal writers, politicians, army officers and students, who were encouraged by his own turn (whether genuine or not) to liberal ideas during the 'Hundred Days' before Waterloo in an attempt to broaden his support. Very much aware of the weakness of his situation, Napoleon had gone to some lengths to reassure the world that his dreams of conquest were over, and the

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[211] Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914,* London: Penguin, 2017, pp. 11-12,

[212] Simon Jenkins, *A Short History of England,* London: Profile, 2011, pp. 188-189.

French that he would respect the rights and liberties of the citizen and no longer behave like an imperial dictator. He continued in the same vein in his writings in exile before his death. In subsequent decades the legend of the 'liberal Emperor' gained still further in potency. 'During his life,' remarked the writer François René de Chateaubriand (1768-1848), 'the world slipped through his grasp, but in death he possessed it.' In France, 'Bonapartism' came to stand for patriotism, universal manhood suffrage, the sovereignty of the nation, the institution of an efficient, centralized, bureaucratic administration that dealt equally with all citizens, the periodic consultation of the people by its government through plebiscites and referendums, and an implicit contract between Frenchmen and the state that provided social order and political stability, national pride, and military glory. Not so far removed from Republicanism, Bonapartism differed from it by its greater emphasis on strong leadership and military prowess. But like Republicanism, it struck deep roots in significant parts of the French population…

"… For many people outside France, too, the cult of Napoleon stood for the achievements of the Revolution, translated into purposeful reform after the excesses of the terror in the early 1790s. Irish republicans and Polish nationalists looked to Napoleon for inspiration in their political struggles. The Venezuelan liberator of large swathes of South America from Spanish rule, Simón Bolívar (1783-1830), admired Napoleon so much that he had made the journey to Milan to see his hero crowned King of Italy. In China and Madagascar, Napoleon was worshipped by some as a god…"[213]

"One of the most remarkable and panoramic descriptions of the battle of Waterloo," writes Sachs, "unfolds in *The Charterhouse of Parma*, a novel written in 1839 by Marie-Henri Beyle – better known by his nom de plume – Stendhal – who had been attached to the French army off and on throughout Bonaparte's rule as first consul and reign as Emperor Napoleon I… Early in *Charterhouse*, Fabrice del Dongo, the novel's impetuous young protagonist runs away from his aristocratic, ultraconservative father's home to serve Napoleon; he observes the battle that puts a decisive end to his hero's career; then wonders how he can possibly make something of himself now that the revolutionary-imperial adventure has been snuffed out. And the same predicament dominates the lives of the wholly different young male protagonists of Stendhal's two other, earlier, fictional masterpieces, *The Red and the Black* and the unfinished *Lucien Leuwen.* All three characters seem to be consciously or subconsciously obsessed with one question: What do we do, now that Napoleon is gone and all the enthusiasm-engendering excitement is over?

"Stendhal, who was born in 1783, was curious about how the Napoleonic era, viewed as a bygone epic, would affect post-Waterloo youths, because he knew so very well what the emperor's reign – which he called 'the despotism of glory' – had meant to young people of his own generation. He had witnessed and subscribed to the initial idealism, to the notion that France's mission was not only to repulse the armies of the foreign monarchies allied against the forces of the Revolution but also to liberate all of Europe from the tyranny of absolutism. As the wars dragged on, however, he had seen those ideals subverted, reduced to hollow, meaningless slogans and used as an excuse for conquest, with all of its accompanying devastation. Later, in the aftermath of Napoleon's defeat, Stendhal became one of the first literary figures to perceive the relationship between the death of the Revolution and the flowering of Romanticism – Romanticism understood as a sublimation of the liberating principles of a revolution that had first exploded across Europe and then imploded on itself…"[214]

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[213] Evans, op. cit., p. 13.

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[214] Sachs, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

13. THE GEOPOLITICS OF ABOLITIONISM

Perhaps the greatest paradox of nineteenth-century history is the fact that the United Kingdom, the main power spreading liberalism throughout the world, which had, with Russia, defeated the French revolution in its anti-liberal, Napoleonic phase, was at the same time the greatest empire in history, which had come to rule over, if not technically enslave, hundreds of millions of people around the globe. If this was the greatest paradox, then slavery was the greatest affront to the new liberal creed of "progressive" humanity; and as the nineteenth century progressed, this was the issue that more than any other threatened to divide the Great Powers between and within themselves. So they were forced to discuss it in the intervals when they were not combatting some revolutionary outbreak (of which there were many in this period).

Thus at the Vienna Congress on 8 February 1815, they agreed a common statement, as Bernard Simms writes, "that the slave trade was repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality. For the moment this was mere aspiration, but the potentially huge international ramifications of the issue were already clear…"[215]

These revolved around the fact that while the victors of 1815 had declared themselves against slavery, in the eyes of many liberals and revolutionaries the monarchical regimes of Russia, Prussia and Austria kept the peasants and subject nations of their empires in virtual slavery, or at any rate serfdom. This gave a propaganda advantage to the only victor nation that had – officially, if not yet *de facto* in all her dominions - abolished slavery and serfdom, Britain, and it allowed the British, while formally belonging to the monarchical, anti-revolutionary Holy Alliance, to interfere on the side of liberals and revolutionaries in such places as Spain, Italy and Latin America. Of course, it may plausibly be argued that the condition of industrial workers in Britain, as of many millions of subjects in the British empire, was little short of slavery; but the propaganda advantage remained, and was used vigorously by the British.

How and why was slavery introduced into the West?

Slavery, the slave trade and forced labour were near-universal phenomena in the ancient world, being commonly practiced among both the pagans and the Christians of Europe and Africa, and then among the Arab Muslims, since the time of the Egyptian pharaohs.[216]

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[215] Simms, *Europe: The Struggle for Supremacy,* London: Allen Lane, 2013, p. 181.

[216] See Christine Tasin, "Esclavage: les Arabo-musulmans ont tué ou déporté 17 millions d'Africains et 3 millions d'Européens", May 10, 2017. http://resistancerepublicaine.eu/2017/05/10/les-arabo-musulmans-ont-tue-ou-deporte-17-millions-dafricains-et-3-millions-deuropeens. See also Bill Warner, "Slavery – the Whole Story", https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0goqyMnJgsg&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR2bFSjfbbXThpBmnE74tv9F_RGiKty_nx_zUYz4_DdQJj9xjiFYS4WNclQ.

According to Yuval Noah Harari, "At the end of the Middle Ages, slavery was almost unknown in Christian Europe. During the early modern period, the rise of European capitalism went hand in hand with the rise of the Atlantic slave trade. Unrestrained market forces, rather than tyrannical kings or racist ideologues, were responsible for this calamity.

"When the Europeans conquered America, they opened gold and silver mines and established sugar, tobacco and cotton plantations. These mines and plantations became the mainstay of American production and export. The sugar plantations were particularly important. In the Middle Ages, sugar was a rare luxury in Europe. It was imported from the Middle East at prohibitive prices and used sparingly as a secret ingredient in delicacies and snake-oil medicines. After large sugar plantations were established in America, ever-increasing amounts of sugar began to reach Europe. The price of sugar dropped and Europe developed an insatiable sweet tooth. Entrepreneurs met this need by producing large quantities of sweets: cakes, cookies, chocolate, candy, and sweetened beverages such as cocoa, coffee and tea. The annual sugar intake of the average Englishman rose from near zero in the early seventeenth century to around eight kilograms in the early nineteenth century.

"However, growing cane and extracting the sugar was a labour-intensive business. Few people wanted to work long hours in malaria-infested sugar fields under a tropical sun. Contract labourers would have produced a commodity too expensive for mass consumption. Sensitive to market forces, and greedy for profits and economic growth, European plantation owners switched to slaves.

"From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, about 10 million African slaves were imported to America. About 70 per cent of them worked on the sugar plantations. Labour conditions were abominable. Most slaves lived a short and miserable life, and millions more died during wars waged to capture slaves or during the long voyage from inner Africa to the shores of America. All this so that Europeans could enjoy their sweet tea and candy – and sugar barons could enjoy huge profits.

"The slave trade was not controlled by any state or government. It was a purely economic enterprise, organized and financed by the free market according to the laws of supply and demand. Private slave-trading companies sold shares on the Amsterdam, London and Paris stock exchanges. Middle-class Europeans looking for a good investment bought these shares. Relying on this money, the companies bought ships, hired sailors and soldiers, purchased slaves in Africa and transported them to America. There they sold the slaves to the plantation owners, using the proceeds to purchase plantation products such as sugar, cocoa, coffee, tobacco, cotton and rum. They returned to Europe, sold the sugar and cotton for a good price, and then sailed to Africa to begin another round. The shareholders were very pleased with this arrangement. Throughout the eighteenth century the yield on slave-trade investments was about 6 per cent a year – they were extremely profitable, as any modern consultant would be quick to admit.

"… The African slave trade did not stem from racist hatred towards Africans. The individuals who bought the slaves, the brokers who sold them, and the managers of the slave-trade companies rarely thought about the Africans. Nor did the owners of the sugar plantations. Many owners lived far from their plantations, and the only information they demanded were neat ledgers of profits and losses…"[217]

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Although the Muslims of Africa were the main wholesale traders in slavery, it was the British," writes Robert Tombs, who were "were by far the largest shippers, carrying over 3 million people between 1660 and 1807, when Parliament banned the trade; the French, and the Portuguese in Brazil were the biggest customers. African rulers were eager suppliers. The trade expanded, reaching an all-time peak in the 1780s, when British ships were transporting about 120 Africans per day. Sugar flowed out and imports flooded back: linen from Ireland and Scotland, fish from Newfoundland, timber and rum from New England, and manufactured goods from England. This was the notorious 'triangular trade': carrying manufactured goods to Africa in exchange for slaves, sold in the Caribbean to purchase sugar for Europe. By 1780 Liverpool was shipping one-third of Manchester's total cloth exports to Africa. Britain and France were prepared to make unlimited efforts to seize and hold sugar islands, principally Jamaica for the British and Saint-Domingue (now Haiti) for the French. Tens of thousands of troops were repeatedly sacrificed to tropical diseases: officers resigned and men deserted when ordered there. But as George III put it to one of his ministers in 1779, 'Our islands must be defended even at a risk of the invasion of this island' – Britain itself."[218]

However, consciences began to stir; Adam Smith argued that slavery was economically inefficient; the hunch-backed Quaker Benjamin Lay agitated against it in America, William Wilberforce and others – in Britain; and slavery was eventually abolished, beginning in the world's greatest empire, that of Britain.

In the early modern period, writes Henry Kissinger, "the West expanded with the familiar hallmarks of colonialism – avariciousness, cultural chauvinism, lust for glory. But it is also true that its better elements tried to lead a kind of global tutorial in an intellectual method that encouraged skepticism and a body of political and diplomatic practices including democracy. It all but ensured that, after long periods of subjugation, the colonized peoples would eventually demand – and achieve - self-determination. Even during their most brutal depredations, the expansionist powers put forth, especially in Britain, a vision that at some point conquered peoples would begin to participate in the fruits of a common global system…"[219]

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[217] Harari, *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind,* London: Vintage, 2011, pp. 368-370.

[218] Tombs, *The English and their History,* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014, p. 340.

Since the anti-slavery movement was all about freedom and equality, one would have expected revolutionary France to take the lead in it.[220] But the French under Napoleon chose rather to enforce slavery in the Caribbean and attempt to conquer the whole of Europe from Spain to Russia. It was the counter-revolutionary British rather than the revolutionary French who initiated this most liberal of causes… A cynic might argue that the British enthusiasm for the abolition of slavery stemmed from a hard-headed calculation that in the new industrial age slaves would soon cease to be economical by comparison with machines. After all, as David Starkey has pointed out, the period of the anti-slavery movement in Britain, roughly from the 1760s to the 1830s, coincided very closely with the period of the first industrial revolution… While some may have thought in this way, it is unlikely that such a broad-based movement, whose success involved not only the loss of earnings from slavery but the payment of large sums by the government to redeem slaves, could have come entirely from the profit motive…

The movement really began in 1772, when "Lord Mansfield, a judge, ruled that a runaway slave there could not be forced back by his master to the West Indies. The ruling was interpreted (questionably, but this was the effect) as confirming that there could be no slavery in Britain."[221] Then, "in late May 1787, a group of parliamentarians, doctors, clergymen and others met in London to form the 'Committee of the Society for the purpose of effecting the abolition of the Slave Trade'. Its supporters were driven by an often religiously inspired sense of humanitarian outrage at the whole concept of slavery, and especially the horrors of the 'middle passage', the transportation across the Atlantic. In mid-April 1791, William Wilberforce's parliamentary bill demanding the abolition of the slave trade failed, but put the issue firmly on the political agenda. The slaves, of course, were not passive recipients of western benevolence. In August 1791 a major counter-revolutionary revolt broke out in the French Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue led by plantation slaves outraged not only by the Revolution's continued toleration of slavery and its failure to extend the rights of man to *gens de couleur* but also by its treatment of the king and revealed religion. Their leaders regarded themselves as African tribal chiefs rather than representatives of the people. Left to their own devices the revolting slaves would probably have set up a political system similar to the traditional slave-owning African kingdoms from they had originally come; they regularly sold black captives to the Spanish and British. The revolt was a major headache for the European powers, especially Britain and Spain, who drew much of their revenue, and thus their European leverage, from slave plantations in the Caribbean, and the Americans, who feared that the example of Haiti would inflame the black population of the Southern states. The relationship between slavery and the international balance was thus very close…"[222]

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[219] Kissinger, *World Order,* London: Penguin, 2015, p. 174.

[220] After all, even Louis XVI had discussed abolishing slavery to Turgot as early as 1774. 9"Louis XVI voulait abolir 'esclavage en 1774", *Une Autre Histoire,* http://une-autre-histoire.org/louis-xvi-voulait-abolir-lesclavage-en-1774).

[221] "Guilty Parties", *The Economist,* December 31, 1999, p. 90.

Thus James Walvin writes: "The emergence of the independent black republic of Haiti from the wreckage of plantation slavery in St. Domingue sent shock waves throughout the Americas. It also sent refugees (white and black) fleeing to other islands, especially to neighbouring Jamaica, and to North America, with terrifying tales of what had happened. Defenders of the slave trade (and slavery) felt vindicated. Here was living proof of all their warnings: if you tamper with the slave system, catastrophe would inevitably follow. It was a powerful blow against British abolition and it was reinforced by subsequent military disasters.

"St. Domingue was a temptation to the British. It was a fruitful colony whose sugar and coffee threatened to displace British Caribbean produce on world markets. For William Pitt, the opportunity to seize St. Domingue, and to add it to Britain's necklace of Caribbean possessions, proved too good to resist. But Pitt's plans took little notice of Haitian leader and former slave Toussaint L'Ouverture's rebellious slaves on the island, or of tropical disease, and the British invading force was soon overwhelmed. The loss of life was horrendous and the whole endeavour proved a military debacle whose significance was camouflaged by being so distant from the metropolis. Pitt's aims of augmenting Britain's slave possessions ended in the deaths of more than 40,000 men…"[223]

In 1799, the French tried to take back the colony. In 1802 Napoleon was proclaiming: "Never will the French Nation give chains to men whom it has once recognized as free."[224] But in the same year his forces tried to reintroduce slavery, only to be defeated by black soldiers singing the Marseillaise...[225]

Then, in the next year, as Joanna Bourke writes, "Haitians waged the first successful anti-colonial revolution, to found the first black republic. Their armed struggle won them a nation to call their own at colossal cost.[226] The fury of the entire Western world turned against the new nation, ostracizing them and even insisting that former slaves pay compensation to their owners. Well into the twentieth century, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere was paying this financial debt to one of the world's strongest economies, France."[227]

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[222] Simms, op. cit., p. 145.

[223] Walvin, "The Cause of a Nation", *BBC History Magazine,* vol. 8, no. 3, March, 2007, p. 7.

[224] Zamoyski, *Holy Madness: Romantics, Patriots and Revolutionaries, 1776-1871*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, p. 130.

[225] Mark Almond, *Revolution,* London: De Agostini, 1996, p. 85.

[226] More than 100,000 slaves died in many barbarous ways in Haiti (Claude Ribbe, in Ian Sparks, "How Napoleon's massacre of 100,000 blacks inspired Hitler", *Daily Mail,* November 30, 2005, p. 35), (V.M.)

[227] Bourke, *What it Means to be Human*, London: Virago, 2011, p. 128. By a profound irony, "according to one estimate, Haiti has more slaves [today] 'than any other country outside Asia." (op. cit., p. 152)

The British, meanwhile, had really bitten the anti-slavery bullet. In 1807 parliament banned the slave *trade*, but not yet slavery itself. Then in June, 1814, "on his return from preparatory negotiations in Paris, the British Foreign Secretary had been greeted by his fellow parliamentarians with a standing ovation. Among the terms of the treaty agreed by Lord Castlereagh had been one particularly startling stipulation: that Britain and France would join in a campaign to abolish the slave trade. This, to Benjamin Lay, would have been fantastical, an impossible dream. The treaty, though, in the view of some in the British parliament, did not go nearly far enough. Castlereagh, anxious not to destabilise France's recently restored monarchy, had agreed that French merchants should be permitted to continue trafficking slaves for a further five years. This, it turned out, was a concession too far. Within days of the Foreign Secretary's seemingly triumphant return from Paris, an unprecedented campaign of protest had swept Britain. Petitions on a scale never before witnessed had deluged Parliament. A quarter of all those eligible to sign them had added their names. Never before had the mass of the British public committed themselves so manifestly to a single issue. It had become for them, the French Foreign Minister noted in mingled bemusement and disdain, 'a passion carried to fanaticism, and one which the ministry is no longer at liberty to check'. Castlereagh, negotiating with his opposite numbers at Vienna, knew that his hands were tied. He had no option but to secure a treaty against the slave trade.

"Barely sixty years had passed since the Philadelphia Friends had banned Quakers from dealing in slaves. In that short space of time, a cause that had rendered Benjamin Lay an object of mockery had evolved to shape the counsels of nations. Both in the United States and in Britain, dread that slavery ranked as a monstrous sin, for which not just individuals but entire nations were certain to be chastised by God, had come to grip vast swathes of the population. 'Can it be expected that He will suffer this great iniquity to go unpunished?' Such a question would, of course, have bewildered earlier generations of Christians. The passages in the Bible that appeared to sanction slavery remained. Plantation-owners – both in the West Indies and the southern United States – did not hesitate to quote them. But this had failed to stem the rising swell of protest. Indeed, it had left slave-owners open to a new and discomfiting charge: that they were the enemies of progress. Already, by the time of the American Revolution, to be a Quaker was to be an abolitionist. The gifts of the Spirit, though, were not confined to the Friends. They had come to be liberally dispensed wherever English-speaking Protestants were gathered. Large numbers of them, ranging from Baptists to Anglicans, had been graced with good news: *evangelion*. To be an Evangelical was to understand that the law of God was the law not only of justice, but of love. No one who had felt the chains of sin fall away could possibly doubt 'that *slavery* was ever detestable in the sight of God.' There was no time to lose. And so it was, in 1807, in the midst of a deadly struggle for survival against Napoleon, that the British Parliament had passed the Act for the Abolition of the Slave Trade; and so it was, in 1814, that Lord Castlereagh, faced across the negotiating table by uncomprehending foreign princes, had found himself obliged to negotiate for the eradication of a business that other nations still took for granted. Amazing Grace indeed.

"To Sade, of course, it all had been folly. There was no brotherhood of man; there was no duty owed the weak by the strong. Evangelicals, like Jacobins, were the dupes of that shared inheritance: their belief in progress; their conviction in the potential of reform; their faith that might be brought to the light. Yet it was precisely this kinship, this synergy, that enabled Castlereagh, faced by the obduracy of his fellow foreign ministers, to craft a compromise that was, in every sense of the word, enlightened. Unable to force through an explicit outlawing of the slave trade, he settled instead for something at once more nebulous and more far-reaching. On 8 February 1815, eight powers in Europe signed up to a momentous declaration. Slavery, it stated, was 'repugnant to the principles of humanity and universal morality.'"[228]

Slavery itself was not banned in the British Empire until 1833. And it did not end in the British Caribbean until 1838…[229] But the band-waggon was on the move…

In the declaration, as Holland writes, "the language of evangelical Protestantism was fused with that of the French Revolution. Napoleon, slipping his place of exile three weeks after the declaration had been signed, and looking to rally international support for his return, had no hesitation in proclaiming his support for the declaration. That June, in the great battle outside Brussels that terminally ended his ambitions, both sides were agreed that slavery, as an institution, was an abomination. The twin traditions of Britain and France, of Benjamin Lay and Voltaire, of enthusiasts for the Spirit and enthusiasts for reason, had joined in amity even before the first cannon was fired at Waterloo. The irony was one that neither Protestants nor atheists cared to dwell upon: that an age of enlightenment and revolution had served to establish as international law a principle that derived from the depths of the Catholic past. Increasingly, it was in the language of human rights that Europe would proclaim its values to the world…"[230]

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[228] Holland, *Dominion,* pp. 393-395.

[229] "Guilty Parties", *The Economist,* December 31, 1999, p. 90.

[230] Holland, *Dominion,* pp. 395-396..

II. THE EAST: THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

14. TSAR PAUL I

The Russian educated classes, brought up as they were on European literature of the "enlightened" eighteenth century, in general shared the enthusiasm of the Europeans for the French revolution in its first, relatively liberal stage. "'Although the Bastille had certainly not been a threat of any kind to any inhabitant of Petersburg, wrote Segur, now French ambassador there, 'I find it difficult to express the enthusiasm aroused among the shop-keepers, merchants, townsfolk and some young people of a higher class by the fall of this state prison and this first triumph of a stormy liberty. Frenchmen, Russians, Danes, Germans, Englishmen, Dutchmen, all were exchanging congratulations and embraces on the streets, as though they had been delivered from some excessively heavy chain that had been weighing down on them.'"[231]

The Empress Catherine had flirted with the ideas of the French Enlightenment. "She founded a Society for the Translation of Foreign Books into Russian, which she endowed with two thousand roubles. She corresponded with Voltaire, who applauded her resolute actions against the Catholic Church (in Poland). She offered Diderot a press and publishing facilities for the *Encyclopédie* in Riga when he was having difficulties with the authorities in France and she invited him to St. Petersburg, where they had long conversations in private."[232]

However, correctly seeing in the Jacobin terror the product of Enlightenment ideas, she sharply changed her opinion of them.[233] In 1792 she invaded Poland because she regarded Warsaw as "a brazier of Jacobinism".[234] "Yesterday I remembered," she wrote to Grimm in 1794, "that you told me more than once: this century is the century of preparations. I will add that these preparations consisted in preparing dirt and dirty people of various kinds, who produce, have produced and will produce endless misfortunes and an infinite number of unfortunate people."

"The next year," writes Ivanov, "she categorically declared that the *Encyclopédie* had only two aims: the one – to annihilate the Christian religion, and the other – royal power. 'I will calmly wait for the right moment when you will see how right is my opinion concerning the philosophers and their hangers-on that they participated in the revolution…, for Helvétius and D'Alambert both admitted to the deceased Prussian king that this book had only two aims: the first – to annihilate the Christian religion, and the second – to annihilate royal power. They spoke about this already in 1777."[235] Now she hastened to support the traditional Orthodox concept of obedience to the authorities, and had the following anathema added to the *Rite of Orthodoxy*: "To those who think that with the anointing to the kingship the gifts of the Holy Spirit are not poured out on them for the conduct of this lofty office; and therefore who dare to revolt and to commit treason against them: **anathema**".

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[231] Adam Zamoyski, *Holy Madness,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, pp. 56-57.

[232] Sir Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia. People and Empire 1552-1917,* London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 116.

[233] Actually, Catherine had never been a liberal. Thus in her *Nakaz* or "Instruction" of 1767 she spoke against the state in which the idea of equality takes root in the people to such an extent "that everyone aims at being equal to him… who is ordained by the Laws to rule over him" (article 503). And when the dramatist A.P. Sumarokov said: "The majority of votes does not confirm the truth; truth is confirmed by profound reason and impartiality," the empress replied approvingly: "The majority does not confirm the truth, but only indicates the wishes of the majority." (Isabel De Madariaga, *Russia in the Age of Catherine the Great,* London: Phoenix Press, 2002, pp. 157, 159)

[234] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 91.

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St. John Maximovich writes that the Tsarevich Paul, "was very different in his character and convictions from the Empress Catherine. Catherine II preferred to remove her son from the inheritance and make her eldest grandson, Alexander Pavlovich, her heir… At the end of 1796 Catherine II finally decided to appoint Alexander as her heir, passing Paul by, but she suddenly and unexpectedly died. The heir, Tsarevich Paul Petrovich, ascended the throne…"[236]

The Tsarevich, writes Fr. Alexis Nikolin, "was brought up under the care of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna. As his teacher of the Law of God, Hieromonk, later Metropolitan Platon (Levshin), witnessed of him: 'My lofty pupil was always, happily, inclined towards piety, and reasonings or discussions about God and the faith were always pleasant to him. This, I might observe, was instilled in him from the milk of the reposed Empress Elizabeth Petrovna, who loved him ardently and educated him, and from the pious women whom she appointed.'

"Paul I's religious disposition was also evident from the content of his first legislative acts – on the succession to the throne and on the manifesto on the landowners' peasants, which were proclaimed on the very day of his coronation, which took place on the Radiant Sunday of Pascha…"[237]

On that day, the Tsar demonstrated to devotion to the traditions of pre-Petrine Russia by putting on the purple and being vested in the dalmatic, one of the royal vestments of the Byzantine emperors. Thus the rite moved a significant step away from the symbolism of the First Rome, which had been the model of Peter, and back to the symbolism of the New Rome of Constantinople, the Mother-State of Holy Rus'. And in general, Tsar Paul went a long way to restoring the Orthodox monarchy's autocratic but non-absolutist character after the absolutism of the eighteenth-century tsars.

For, as D.A. Khomiakov writes, "the tsar is 'the denial of absolutism' precisely because he is bound by the confines of the people's understanding and world-view, which serve as that framework within which the power can and must consider itself to be free."[238]

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[235] Ivanov, op. cit., p. 211.

[236] St. John Maximovich, *Proiskhozhdenie Zakona o Prestolonasledovanii v Rossii* (The Origin of the Law on the Succession to the Throne in Russia), Shanghai, 1936, Podolsk, 1994.

[237] Nikolin, *Tserkov' i Gosudarstvo* (Church and State), 1997, p. 105.

After the coronation, writes Archpriest Lev Lebedev, the Tsar "himself read out a new *Statute* [*Uchrezhdenie*] *on the Imperial Family* which he had composed together with [the Tsaritsa] Maria Fyodorovna. By this law he abolished Peter I's decree of 1722 on the right of the Russian Autocrat to appoint the Heir to the Throne according to his will *and revived* the Basic Act of 1613. From now on and forever (!) a strict *order* of succession was established according to which the eldest son became his father's heir, and in the case of childlessness – his elder brother. The law also foresaw various other cases, determining the principles of the succession to the Throne in accordance with *the ancient, pre-Petrine* (!) Russian customs and certain important new rules (for example, a Member of the Imperial Family wanting to preserve his rights to the succession must enter only into an *equal by blood* marriage with a member of a royal or ruling house, that is, who is not lower than himself by blood). Paul I's new law once and for all cut off the danger in Russia of those 'revolution'-coups which had taken place in the eighteenth century. And it meant that the power of the nobility over the Russian Tsars was ending; now they could be independent of the nobility's desires and sympathies. *The autocracy was restored in Russia!* Deeply wounded and *'offended', the nobility* immediately, from the moment of the proclamation of the law 'On the Imperial Family', entered into opposition to Paul I. The Tsar had to suffer the first and most powerful blow of the opposition. This battle between the Autocrat and the nobility was *decisive,* it determined the future destiny of the whole state. It also *revealed who was who* in Great Russia. All the historians who hate Paul I are not able to diminish the significance of the Law of 1797; they recognise that it was exceptionally important and correct, but they remark that it was the only outstanding act of this Emperor (there were no others supposedly). But *such* an act would have been more than sufficient for the whole reign! For this act signified a radical counter-coup – or, following the expression of the time, counter-revolution - to that which Catherine II had accomplished.

"However, the haters lie here, as in everything else! The law was not the only important act of his Majesty. *On the same day* of 1797 Paul I proclaimed a manifesto in which *for the first time the serf*-peasants were obliged *to make an oath of allegiance* to the Tsars and were called, not 'slaves', but '*beloved subjects*', that is, they were recognized as *citizens* of the State! There is more! Paul I issued a decree *forbidding* landowners to force serfs to work corvée for more than *three days* in the week: the other three days the peasants were to work for themselves, and on Sundays – rest and celebrate 'the day of the Lord', like all Christians.[239]

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[238] Khomiakov, *Pravoslavie, samoderzhavie, narodnost'* (Orthodoxy, Autocracy and Nationality), Minsk, 1997, p. 103.

[239] The decree said: "The Law of God given to us in the ten commandments teaches us to devote the seventh day to God; which is why on this day, which is glorified by the triumph of the Faith, and on which we have been counted worthy to receive the sacred anointing and royal crowning on our Forefathers' Throne, we consider it our duty before the Creator and Giver of all good things to confirm the exact and constant fulfillment of this law throughout our Empire,

Under the threat of severe penalties it was confirmed that masters were forbidden to sell families of peasants one by one. *It was forbidden* to subject serfs older than seventy to physical punishments. (And at the same time *it was permitted* to apply physical punishments *to noblemen* who had been condemned for criminal acts.) All this was nothing other than *the beginning of the liberation of the Russian peasants from serfdom!* In noble circles of the time it was called a 'revolution from above', and for the first time they said of about their Emperor: 'He is mad!' Let us recall that this word was used in relation to the 'peasant' politics of Paul I. He even received a special 'Note' from one assembly of nobles, in which it was said that 'the Russian people *has not matured* sufficiently for the removal of physical punishments'."[240]

"We know of a case when the Tsar came to the defence of some peasants whose landowner was about to sell them severally, without their families and land, so as to make use of the peasants' property. The peasants refused to obey, and the landowner informed the governor of the rebellion. But the governor did not fail to carry out his duty and quickly worked out what was happening. On receiving news about what was happening, Tsar Paul declared the deal invalid, ordered that the peasants be left in their places, and that the landowner be severely censured in his name. The landowner's conscience began to speak to him: he gathered the village commune and asked the peasants for forgiveness. Later he set off for St. Petersburg and asked for an audience with his Majesty. 'Well, what did you sort out with your peasants, my lord? What did they say?' inquired the Emperor of the guilty man. 'They said to me, your Majesty: *God will forgive…*' 'Well, since God and they have forgiven you, I also forgive you. But remember from now on that they are not your slaves, but my subjects just as you are. You have just been entrusted with looking after them, and you are responsible for them before me, as I am for Russia before God…' concluded the Sovereign."[241]

The Tsar also acted to humble the pride of the Guards regiments which, together with the nobility, had acted in the role of king-makers in the eighteenth century. "He forbade the assigning of noblemen's children, babies, into the guards (which had been done before him to increase 'the number of years served'). The officers of the guards were forbidden to drive in four- or six-horse carriages, to hide their hands in winter in fur muffs, or to wear civilian clothing in public. No exception was made for them by comparison with other army officers. At lectures and inspections the Guards were asked about rules and codes with all strictness. How much, then and later, did they speak (and they still write now!) about the 'cane discipline' and the amazing cruelties in the army under Paul I, the nightmarish punishments which were simply means of mocking the military…. Even among the historians who hate Paul I we find the admission that the strictnesses of the Emperor related only to the *officers* (from

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commanding each and every one to observe it, so that no one should have any excuse to dare to force his peasants to work on Sundays…."

[240] Lebedev, *Velikorossia* (Great Russia), St. Petersburg, 1999, pp. 239-240.

[241] "Svyatoj Tsar-Muchenik Pavel", *Svecha Pokaiania*, N 4, February, 2000, p. 18.

the nobility), while with regard to the *soldiers* he was most concerned about their food and upkeep, manifesting a truly paternal attentiveness. By that time the ordinary members of the Guards had long been not nobles, but peasants. And the soldierly mass of the Guards of Paul I very much *loved* him and were devoted to him. Officers were severely punished for excessive cruelty to soldiers… On the fateful night of the murder of Paul I *the Guards soldiers* rushed to support him. The *Preobrazhensky* regiment *refused* to shout 'hurrah!' to Alexander Pavlovich as to the new Emperor, since they were not sure whether his Majesty Paul I was truly dead. Two *soldiers* of the regiment demanded that their commanders give them exact proof of the death of the former Emperor. These soldiers were not only not punished, but were sent as an 'embassy' of the Preobrazhensky to the grave of Paul I. On their return the regiment gave the oath of allegiance to Alexander I. That was the *real* situation of the Russian soldier of Paul's times, and not their fictitious 'rightlessness'!"[242]

"The Emperor Paul's love of justice and care for the simple people was expressed also in the accessibility with which he made his subjects happy, establishing the famous box in the Winter palace whose key was possessed by him personally and into which the first courtier and the last member of the simple people could cast their letters with petitions for the Tsar's immediate defence or mercy. The Tsar himself emptied the box every day and read the petitions, leaving not a single one of them unanswered.

"There was probably no sphere in the State which did not feel the influence of the industrious Monarch. Thus he ordered the minting of silver rubles to struggle against the deflation in the value of money. The Sovereign himself sacrificed a part of the court's silver on this important work. He said that he himself would eat on tin 'until the ruble recovers its rate'. And the regulation on medical institutions worked out by the Emperor Paul could be used in Russia even in our day."[243]

In line with this financial reform, the tsar tried to restore stability to the state's finances. "On ascending the throne of All-Russia," he wrote, "and entering in accordance with duty into various parts of the state administration, at the very beginning of the inspection We saw that the state economy, in spite of the changes in income made at various times, had been subjected to extreme discomforts from the continuation over many years of unceasing warfare and other circumstances. Expenses exceeded income. The deficit was increasing from year to year, multiplying the internal and external debts; in order to make up a part of this deficit, large sums were borrowed, which brought great harm and disorder with them."[244]

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[242] Lebedev, op. cit., pp. 240, 241.

[243] "Svyatoj Tsar-Muchenik Pavel", op. cit.

[244] Tsar Paul, in V.F. Ivanov, *Russkaia Intelligentsia i Masonstvo: ot Petra I do nashikh* dnej (The Russian Intelligentsia and Masonry from Peter I to our days), Harbin, 1934, Moscow, 1997, p. 211.

The tsar was a great benefactor of the Church, increasing the lands of hierarchical houses and the pay of the parish clergy, and freeing the clergy from conscription into the army. The power of bishops was extended to all Church institutions and to all diocesan servers.[245] He opened many seminaries, increased the income of the theological academies by five times, and greatly broadened the curriculum.[246] "Paul I gave hierarchs in the Synod the right *themselves to choose* a candidate for the post of over-procurator, took great care for the material situation of the clergy, and the widows and orphans of priests, and forbade physical punishments for priests before they had been defrocked."[247]

In general, as K.A. Papmehl writes, "Paul proved to be much more generous and responsive to the Church's financial needs than his mother. Although this may to some – perhaps a considerable – extent be attributed to his general tendency to reverse her policies, it was probably due, in at least equal measure, to his different attitude toward the Church based, as it undoubtedly was, on sincere Christian belief…. One symptom of this different attitude was that, unlike his predecessor – or, indeed, successor, Paul dealt with the Synod not through the *Ober-Prokurator*, but through the senior ecclesiastical member: first Gavriil and later Amvrosii."[248]

St. Seraphim of Sarov said: "Our Sovereign who reposed in God, Emperor Paul Petrovich, so loved the holy Church, so venerated its holy rules, and did so much for its benefit, that not many Russian Tsars served God's Church as he did…"

"One of the Tsar's contemporaries, N.A. Sablukov, who had the good fortune, thanks to his service at the Royal Court, to know the Emperor personally, remembered the Emperor Paul in his memoirs as 'a deeply religious man, filled with a true piety and the fear of God…. He was a magnanimous man, ready to forgive offences and recognize his mistakes. He highly prized righteousness, hated lies and deceit, cared for justice and was merciless in his persecution of all kinds of abuses, in particular usury and bribery.'

"The well-known researcher of Paul, Shabelsky-Bork, writes: 'While he was Tsarevich and Heir, Paul would often spend the whole night in prayer. A little carpet is preserved in Gatchina; on it he used to pray, and it is worn through by his knees.' The above-mentioned N.A. Sablukov recounts, in agreement with this: 'Right to the present day they show the places on which Paul was accustomed to kneel, immersed in prayer and often drenched in tears. The parquet is worn through in these places. The room of the officer sentry in which I used to sit during my service in Gatchina was next to Paul's private study, and I often heard the Emperor's sighs when he was standing at prayer.'

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[245] Fr. Alexis Nikolin, *Tserkov' i Gosudarstvo* (The Church and the State), Moscow, 1997, p. 106.

[246] Yu. A. Sorokin, "Pavel I i 'vol'nie kamenschiki'" (Paul I and the 'Freemasons'), *Voprosy Istorii,* 11, 2005, p. 30.

[247] Lebedev, *Velikorossia,* p. 242. A.P. Dobroklonsky writes: "At the beginning of the [19th] century the over-procurator Yakovlev planned to place [the consistories] in a position more independent of the bishops and presented to the sovereign a report about establishing in them a special post of procurator subject only to the over-procurator; but the realization of this report was hindered by Metropolitan Ambrose Podobedov of St. Petersburg, who presented a report on his part that in such a case the canonical authority of the bishops would be shaken and they would become dependent on secular officials" (*Rukovodstvo po istorii russkoj tserkvi* (Handbook on the History of the Russian Church), Moscow, 2001, p. 534).

[248] Papmehl, *Metropolitan Platon of Moscow,* Newtonville: Oriental Research Partners, 1983, p. 78.

"The historical records of those years have preserved a description of the following event: 'A watchman had a strange and wonderful vision when he was standing outside the summer palace… The Archangel Michael stood before the watchman suddenly, in the light of heavenly glory, and the watchman was stupefied and in trembling from this vision… And the Archangel ordered that a cathedral should be raised in his honour there and that this command should be passed on to the Emperor Paul immediately. The special event went up the chain of command, of course, and Paul Petrovich was told about everything. But Paul Petrovich replied: "I already know": he had seen everything beforehand, and the appearance to the watchman was a kind of repetition…' From this story we can draw the conclusion that Tsar Paul was counted worthy also of revelations from the heavenly world…"[249]

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Taking their cue from his mother's contempt for him, and from contemporary aristocratic sources, most historians ever since have described him as mad. But this was undoubtedly a slander motivated by Paul's anti-Enlightenment, pro-Orthodox and pro-peasant policies. A French courtier said of Tsar Paul: "His conversation, and everything he said that I can recall, revealed not only an extremely penetrating and very educated mind, but also a subtle understanding of all the nuances of our customs and all the subtleties of our language."[250] In general, however, he has had a bad press from historians. He was considered eccentric, impulsive, domineering, even mad. Some of his less attractive traits can doubtless be explained by his upbringing, deprived of a father and of his mother's affection and respect. But the nobility, the main source of our knowledge about him, had their own reasons for fearing and reviling him: after having been indulged so much by Catherine the Great and her predecessors, they were reined in by Tsar Paul, who began the slow process of restoring the ascendancy of the monarchy over the nobility and its links with the people and the people's faith, Orthodoxy.

Although Tsar Paul was traditional in his views, this did not prevent from acknowledging sound views and good practice from less traditional sources. Thus he accepted Voltaire's arguments against torture. As Simon Sebag Montefiore writes: "During the latter half of the 18th century Prussia, Sweden, France, Austria and Tuscany all abolished judicial torture. In 1801, under Tsar

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[249] "Svyatoj Tsar-Muchenik Pavel", op. cit. And after his death he himself appeared to people from the other world. See http://lib.rus.ec/b/30838/read.

[250] Alexis Trubetskoy, *Imperial Legend,* Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2003, p. 23.

Paul, Russia decreed that 'the very name of torture, bringing shame and reproach on mankind, should be forever erased from the public memory.'"[251]

In foreign policy, Tsar Paul brought a temporary end to the seemingly endless expansion of Russia's territorial dominion. This was in accordance with a policy he had formulated during the reign of his mother. For, as Alexander Bakhanov writes, "there were quite a few people in Russia who did not consider the decision on endless territorial expansion as correct; but nobody dared to contradict the will of Catherine II. Only one man was found who cast doubt on the chosen expansionist course. He was the Tsarevich Paul. In 1774 he presented a note to Catherine – 'Meditations on the state in general, on the number of soldiers required to defend it, and the defence of all its borders'. The twenty-year-old young man actually formulated a military-state doctrine that after his enthronement would become the basic principle of imperial politics.

"Its essence boiled down to three important points. First, Russia should not conduct offensive wars, but only defensive ones. Secondly, Russia should not expand her borders and should reject territorial expansion. Thirdly, the army should be cut down, but reorganized on the basis of strict reglamentation, thanks to which it would be possible to obtain significant economies in state expenditures.

"Catherine did not simply ignore the suggestions offered by her son, but she angrily rejected them, considering them to be 'the stupidity of a stupid man'..."[252]

But the problems that all nineteenth-century tsars had from the Poles and Jews ingested through Catherine's three partitions of Poland, show that is was she, not he, who was stupid – at any rate, in this respect... In his estimate of Masonry and French influence, if in nothing else, Tsar Paul was in agreement with his mother. 'To isolate Russia from the contagion of the French revolution, Paul forbade the import of books and journals, and, in an extraordinary abrogation of previous practice, prohibited travel abroad – which had been the normal way for Russian nobles to round off their education. He also made abundant use of his intelligence service, the *tainaia ekspeditsia* (inherited, ironically, from his mother) to spy on nobles whom he suspected of opposition to himself."[253] Well-known Masons were required to sign that they would not open lodges (Paul was falsely accused of being a Mason himself[254]), and the great General Suvorov – like Paul, a very religious man - was sent to Vienna to join Austria and Britain in fighting the revolutionary French armies.[255]

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[251] Montefiore, *Titans of History*, London: Quercus, 2012, p. 276.

[252] Bakhanov, *Pavel I* (Paul I), Moscow: Veche, 2010, pp. 74-75.

[253] Hosking, op. cit., p. 121.

[254] Sorokin, op. cit.

Although Suvorov was successful, the French continued to advance through Europe, and when, in 1797, Napoleon threatened the island of Malta, the Catholic Knights of the Order of the Maltese Cross, who had ruled the island since the 16th century, appealed to the protection of Paul, who accepted the responsibility. In gratitude the Maltese offered that he become their Grand Master. Although the Order was Roman Catholic, Paul accepted the honour because the Order was anti-French and anti-revolutionary…[256] "He intended that the Order… should offer an example of chivalry and inspire in nobles the ideals of service, self-sacrifice, duty and discipline."[257]

While Paul in general protected the Order and Catholics in general because they were being persecuted by Napoleon, his Orthodoxy is demonstrated by his *ukaz* of March 18, 1797, which protected peasants from landowners who tried to force them away from Orthodoxy to the unia or convert them to Catholicism.[258]

Tsar Paul was the man chosen by Divine Providence to begin the return of Russian statehood from absolutism to true Autocracy, and to protect the Russian lands, as far as possible, from the poison of the ideas of the French revolution…

We should also not forget here the salutary influence of Tsar Paul's wife, Empress Maria Fyodorovna, who was very popular among the people. A.V. Buganov writes: "While it was the inveterate desire of the enserfed peasants throughout Russia to be liberated, in the villages of Maria Fyodorovna the complete opposite was observed: tradesmen and free men generally were assigned to the number of her peasants. The empress took care that they had enough, and founded village charitable-educational institutions. She often put on feasts for her peasants in her park, where in her presence the young people sang songs and had round dances. The summit of Maria Fyodorovna's activity and the crown of her charitable work was her educational system, which was known as 'the institutions of Empress Maria'. These included shelters and children's homes and educational institutions, especially for women."[259]

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[255] Suvorov's extraordinarily successful career (he has been canonized by the Moscow Patriarchate0 was based, according to Lebedev, "on *Orthodox spirituality.* He taught the soldiers prayer and life according to the commandments of God better than any preacher, so that at times it was difficult to say what Suvorov taught his soldiers more – to be a warrior or to be a real Orthodox Christian!" (*Velikorossia*, p. 234).

[256] Sorokin, op. cit., pp. 33-34. Not too much should be of the fact that the Tsar was sympathetic, or at least not antipathetic, towards Catholicism, which, as Nikolin points out, "was to a large extent linked with fear of the French revolution, which had been cruel to believing Catholics, monks and clergy. This relationship is attested by such facts as his offering the Pope of Rome to settle in Russia, his cooperation with the establishment of the Jesuit order in Russia, and his support for the establishment of a Roman Catholic chapel in St. Petersburg. At the same time attention should be drawn to Paul I's *ukaz* of March 18, 1797, which protected the consciences of peasants whom landowners were trying to detach forcibly from Orthodoxy into the unia or convert to Catholicism." (Nikolin, op. cit., p. 106). "On October 12, 1799 the holy things of the Order were triumphantly brought to Gatchina: *the right hand of St. John the Baptist, a particle of the Cross of the Lord and the icon of the Filerma Odigitria icon of the Mother of God*. Only a spiritually blind man, on learning this fact, would not see the Providence of God in the fact that the Tsar became Master of the Maltese Order. October 12 was introduced into the number of festal days by the Church, and a special service to this feast was composed…" ("Svyatoj Tsar-Muchenik Pavel").

[257] Hosking, op. cit., p. 121.

[258] Nikolin, op. cit., p. 106.

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[259] Buganov, "Lichnosti i sobytia istorii v pamiati russkikh krestian XIX – nachala XX veka" (Personalities and historical events in the memory of the Russian peasants of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries), *Voprosy Istorii* (Questions of History), December, 2005, p. 120.

15. THE ANNEXATION OF GEORGIA

Tsar Paul's love for the Church found expression in two important events in the year 1800: the annexation of Georgia and the reunion of some of the Old Ritualists with the Orthodox Church on a "One Faith" (*Yedinoverie*) basis. The former strengthened the security of the Orthodox world against the external foe, and the latter - its internal unity.

The Georgians had first appealed for Russian protection in 1587. Since then, they had suffered almost continual invasions from the Persians and the Turks, leading to many martyrdoms, of which the most famous was that of Queen Ketevan in 1624. One king, Rostom, even adopted Islam and persecuted Orthodoxy. In fact, from 1634 until the crowning of King Wakhtang in 1701, all the sovereigns of Georgia were Muslim. The eighteenth century saw only a small improvement, and in 1762 King Teimuraz II travelled to Russia for help.

In 1783, in the treaty of Georgievsk known as the *Traktat*, protection was formally offered to King Erekli (Heraclius) II of Kartli-Kakhetia by Catherine II. Persian domination was abjured in favour of Russian. This was a wise move, because the tiny Georgian kingdoms were not viable in the longer term in the face of unrelenting persecution by their Muslim neighbours.

However, Russian protection turned out to be ineffective in the following years, and when Persia struck back in 1795, the Russians could do nothing to help. For "the last, most heavy trial for the Church of Iberia," writes P. Ioseliani, "was the irruption of Mahomed-Khan into the weakened state of Georgia, in the year 1795. In the month of September of that year the Persian army took the city of Tiflis, seized almost all the valuable property of the royal house, and reduced the palace and the whole of the city into a heap of ashes and of ruins. The whole of Georgia, thus left at the mercy of the ruthless enemies of the name of Christ, witnessed the profanation of everything holy, and the most abominable deeds and practices carried on in the temples of God. Neither youth nor old age could bring those cruel persecutors to pity; the churches were filled with troops of murderers and children were killed at their mothers' breasts. They took the Archbishop of Tiflis, Dositheus, who had not come out of the Synod of Sion, made him kneel down before an image of [the most holy Mother of God], and, without mercy on his old age, threw him from a balcony into the river Kur; then they plundered his house, and set fire to it. The pastors of the Church, unable to hide the treasures and other valuable property of the Church, fell a sacrifice to the ferocity of their foes. Many images of saints renowned in those days perished for ever; as, for instance, among others, the image of [the most holy Mother of God] of the Church of Metekh, and that of the Synod of Sion. The enemy, having rifled churches, destroyed images, and profaned the tombs of saints, revelled in the blood of Christians; and the inhuman Mahomed-Khan put an end to these horrors only when there remained not a living soul in Tiflis."[260]

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[260] Ioseliani, *A Short History of the Georgian Church*, Jordanville, 1983, pp. 190-191.

"Russian prestige," writes Donald Rayfield, " was badly damaged: an Iranian warlord had reduced their vassal kingdom to rubble in a matter of days. [King] Erekle's contemporaries, like later historians, suspected that Catherine deliberately abandoned Erekle, just as Stalin, 150 years later, would let the Nazis crush the Warsaw uprising, making it all the more easy to annexe a prostrate country. Only in December did two Russian battalions cross the Daryal Pass, Agha Mohammed Khan was now far away, quelling rebels in Khorasan; Russian and Georgian troops easily reached the Caspian and retook Ganja. On 6 November 1796 Catherine the Great died. Her estranged son Paul immediately reversed all her decisions. Erekle was abandoned again, and General Gudovich was told to treat him merely as 'a potential enemy of our enemies'. Garsevan Chavchavadze's warnings that Agha Mohammed Khan might return delayed the Russian withdrawal, but the Iranians regained Erevan and Karabagh unopposed. On 6 June 1797 Agha Mohammed Khan was murdered at Sadeq-Andrea, an aide of Georgian origin whom he had threatened to execute, and Erekle was able to recoup some losses. But in autumn the Russians withdrew troops and financial support and, insisting on literal observance of the *Traktat,* left Erekle politically and militarily paralysed.

"Kartli-Kakhetia was no longer viable: its population had fallen by half, to some 200,000. There were too few peasants to feed a top-heavy royal family and nobility, let alone an army big enough to defend the territory. International trade dried up. On 11 January 1798 Erekle died. His son, Giorgi XII, was indecisive and ill with gout. He was, his son-in-law said, 'a man devoted no more than three hours a day to affairs of state, and the rest of the time prayed or ate and drank until he vomited and fell asleep.'…"[261]

The royal family was split over who should be heir and whether or not to submit to full union with Russia. "Tsar Paul made discussion irrelevant: he sent in November 1799 a regiment of Jäger and an 'advisor', Piotr Ivanovich Kovalensky, to Tbilisi. The sun shone as 10,000 citizens of Tbilisi, the women in white lining rooftops and balconies, watched their 'liberators' enter the city, cannons firing, church bells ringing. Villages in Kakhetia tried to billet Russian soldiers. Decades of raids and war, they thought were over…"[262]

However, when Giorgi died in December, 1800, the new Tsar, Alexander I, did not allow his heir to be crowned but took over the kingdom by force, appointing a Russian as provisional governor. The Bagrations and the nobility were deprived of all power in exchange for lands, serfs and pensions in Russia. In September Alexander's manifesto was read out: "Not for increasing Our strength, not for greed, not for the extension of Our borders… do we take upon Ourselves the burden of governing the Georgian kingdom; dignity, honour and humanity alone impose on Us the sacred duty, having listened to the prayers of the suffering, in order to deflect their griefs, to institute in Georgia a government which might establish justice, security of the person and of property…"[263]

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[261] Rayfield, *Edge of Empires, a History of Georgia,* London: Reaktion, 2012, p. 256.

[262] Rayfield, op. cit., p. 257.

Russian occupation was harsh - that the Georgians accepted it voluntarily is a fiction. But at least it brought relative peace for a while. "Georgia's peasantry, however, felt no relief. The first major rebellion broke out in spring 1804 at a vulnerable place, just west of the Daryal pass. Local Ossetians protested about grain and meat requisitions of Cossacks: a *kapitan-ispravnik* threw them into pits full of dead cats, whey and excrement. Peasants were then forced to clear the road of snow and rocks: two men were whipped to death, women were yoked to sledges and beaten, others died in avalanches; horses and oxen were worked to death. The Aragvi valley took up arms, killing seventeen to General Volkonsky's troops and occupying forts on the highway: in midsummer 4,000 rebels, Georgians and Ossetians, asked Prince Parnaoz to lead them. On 3 August at the battle of Lomisi, 300 Khevsurs encircled the Russians, who were saved only by Kakhetian noblemen's timidity and General Tsistianov's return from besieging Erevan. Hundreds of highlanders were bayoneted or captured: it was eight years before anti-Russian violence broke out again."[264]

What we have called "Georgia" was in fact the kingdom of Kartli-Kakheti in Eastern Georgia. There was another kingdom on the Black Sea Coast, Mingrelia, which was taken under Russian protection in 1803. And then there was another independent Georgian kingdom in the West, Imeretia, whose capital was Kutaisi. There, King Solomon II of Imeretia, "now allied to the Ottomans, fought Russian troops until in 1810, with Solomon surrounded, [Tsar] Alexander deposed him and annexed the kingdom."[265] Solomon fled, refusing to surrender, and died, still free and sovereign, in Trebizond, in 1815.

"After the king's death, his confessor, Fr. Ise (the future Hieroschemamonk Hilarion] intended to set out for Imeretia (then annexed to Russia) no matter what the consequences. He informed all the courtiers, who numbered about six hundred men, and suggested that they follow his example. Many of them accepted his decision joyfully, but fear of the tsar's wrath hampered this plan. Fr. Ise reassured everyone, promising to take upon himself the task of mediating before the tsar. He immediately wrote out a petition in the name of all the princes and other members of the retinue, and sent it to the tsar. The sovereign graciously received their petition, restored them to their former ranks, and returned their estates…"[266]

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[263] Rayfield, op. cit., p. 259.

[264] Rayfield, op. cit., p. 263.

[265] Montefiore, *The Romanovs,* London: Vintage, 2011, p. 299, note.

[266] "Tower of Virtue: The Life and Ascetic Labors of St. Hilarion the Georgian of Mount Athos", *The Orthodox Word,* vol. 39, NN 3-4 (230-231), May-August, 2003, pp. 117-118.

Although in the long term Russian rule protected Georgia from the incursions of the Muslims, in the shorter term it was harsh and deeply resented by the Georgians. Moreover, it had the unfortunate effect of destroying, not only the independence of the Georgian kingdoms, but also the autocephaly of the Georgian Church.

Archpriest Zakaria Machitadze writes: "The foreign officials sent to rule in Georgia began to interfere considerably in the affairs of the Church, and it soon became clear that the Russian government [contrary to the eighth paragraph of the treaty of 1783] intended to abolish the autocephaly of the Georgian Church and subordinate it to the Russian Synod.

"On June 10, 1811, Tsar Alexander summoned Anton II, Patriarch of All Georgia, to his court and from there sent him into exile. For ten years Georgia had neither a king nor a spiritual leader, and the people began to lose their sense of political and spiritual independence.

"There ensued a period of great difficulty in the life of the Georgian Church. The Church was subordinated to the Russian Synod through an exarch, or representative, of the synod. From 1811 to 1817 the Georgian nobleman Varlaam served as exarch, but after his term all the subsequent exarches were Russian by descent. The foreign exarches' ignorance of the Georgian language, traditions, local saints, and feast gave rise to many conflicts between the foreign clergy and the Georgian Orthodox believers. The most contemptible exarches stole valuable pieces of jewelry and masterpieces of the Georgian enamel arts and sent them to Russia. Many cathedrals were left to fall into ruin, and the number of diocese in Georgia dropped dramatically from twenty-four to five. Divine services in the Georgian language and ancient polyphonic chants were replaced by services in Slavonic and the music of the post-Petrine Russian Church.

"Russian domination of the Church aroused considerable vexation and indignation in the Georgian people, and evidence of the exarchs' anti-Georgian activities exacerbated their discontent. Despite the wise admonitions of many Russian elders to respect the portion assigned by lot to the Theotokos and converted by the holy Apostles themselves, appalling crimes continued to be committed against the Georgian Church and nation. Frescoes in churches were whitewashed, and the Khakuli Icon of the Theotokos along with other icons and objects adorned with precious gold and silver were stolen…"[267]

In spite of these deviations, the annexation of Georgia marked an important step forward in Russia's progress to fulfilling her mission as the Third Rome. In 1826 General Paskevich defeated the Persians and by the Treaty of Turkmenchai obtained Armenia and Azerbaijan as provinces of Russian Transcaucasia. The Georgians began to recover under his and his successor's rule, and after a failed coup attempt in 1832 abandoned all hope of independence …

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[267] Machitadze, *Lives of the Georgian Saints,* Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood Press, 2006, pp. 123-124.

In 1901 Fr. John Vostorgov, the future hieromartyr, meditated on this almost unprecedented union of two peoples and Churches as follows: "In voluntarily uniting herself with Russia, Georgia gained much. But we must not forget that she also lost: she lost her independent existence as a separate state, that which served and serves as the object of ardent desires and bloody struggles up to now in many peoples, and which Georgia herself defended for a long series of centuries as an inestimable treasure with as lofty heroism as can be attributed to any people in history.

"Whether we recognize or not the providential significance of peoples in history, we must in any case agree that historical and geographical conditions at least place before this or that people this or that *world task*. Only from this point of view do the ardent enthusiasms of patriotism, and the fervent desire and care to bring greatness and power to one's homeland, acquire a meaning and higher justification: her greatness and power are not an end, but the means to serve the universal, pan-human good. But what was the destiny of Russia on the universal-historical plane? It would not be an exaggeration, nor an artificial invention to point to the fact that she, as standing on the borders of the East and the West, is destined to mediate between them, and to work out in her own history a higher synthesis of the principles of life of the East and the West, which are often contradictory and hostile to one another, pushing them onto the path of bitter struggle, reconciling them in the unity of a higher, unifying cultural type. This task – a great, colossal, unique task – was bequeathed to Russia by deceased Byzantium, which in her turn inherited it from ancient Greece with her eastern-Persian armies, her powerful Hellenism, which was victoriously borne even in the time of Alexander the Great into the very heart of the East.

"But much earlier than Russia this great task was recognized and accepted by Georgia…

"In the days of the ancient struggle between Greece and Persia, the West was characterized, spiritually speaking, by the religions of anthropomorphism, and the East – by Parsism. Georgia, like Armenia, stood at that time completely on the side of the latter. The Persians placed a seal on the clothing, morals and customs of the Georgians, and on their royal dynasties, language and religion, that is perceptible to this day, because in deep antiquity the native paganism of the Georgians was supplanted by the worship of Armazd, in whose name we can undoubtedly hear the name of the Persian Ormuzd. A new, powerful influence entered into the world when the West accepted Christianity and placed it on the banner of her historical existence. And before the appearance of Christianity, under Caesar and Pompey, we see in Georgia the beginnings of an attraction towards the West. But she finally understood her own mission in the world only in the light of Christianity: under the emperor Hadrian, this was still expressed in an indecisive manner and bore the character of a certain compulsion, but under Constantine the Great this was finally and irreversibly recognized.

"It is not in vain that the year of the victory of Constantine the Great near Adrianople (323), and the declaration that Christianity was not only permitted (as it had been in 312 and 313) but the dominant religion of the Roman empire, coincides with the year of the baptism of the Georgians in Mskhet… A remarkable coincidence! King Mirian, who was by birth from a Persian dynasty, wavered quite a bit until, propelled by the historical calling of his people, in spite of his family links with Persia, he decided to make this step, which irreversibly defined the destiny of Georgia. Soon the East, in its turn, exchanged Parsism for Islam, and there began the great duel of two worlds. Western Europe responded, and responded powerfully, to this duel with its crusades. But we can say that the life and history of Georgia was one long crusade, one long heroic and martyric feat! The arena of the great struggle was continually being widened in the direction of the north: from ancient Greece to Byzantium, to Georgia, to the south-western Slavic peoples. But when Byzantium began to decline, from the tenth century, still further to the north, the young Russian people was called into the arena, bearing upon herself the seal of great powers and a great destiny. But until she grew up and thrust aside a multitude of paths that bound her childhood and youth, until she had passed through the educational suffering of her struggle with the wild hordes, with the infidels, in the crucible of the Tatar yoke, and in domestic upheavals, Georgia remained alone. It is difficult to represent and describe her boundless sufferings, her faithfulness to the Cross, her heroism worthy of eternal memory, her merits before the Christian world.

"Soon the Tatar yoke became synonymous with Islam; Russia, casting aside that yoke, moved further and further into the Muslim world, became stronger and stronger, and finally the hour of the will of God sounded: she gave the hand of help and complete union to exhausted Iberia, which had reached the final limits of exhaustion in her unequal struggle. Peoples having a single world task naturally merged into one on the level of the state also…

"But this is not all: the situation of the struggle between Islam and Christianity, between the East and the West, immediately changed. Russia, having established herself in Transcaucasia, immediately became a threat to Persia and Turkey; with unprecedented rapidity and might she cast the banner of Islam far from the bounds of tormented Georgia. Only one century has passed since the time of the union of Russia and Georgia, and in the meantime what a huge, hitherto unseen growth has taken place in Christian Russia, and, by contrast, fall in Muslim Turkey and Persia! This demonstrates to all how much good the executed decision of the two peoples to merge into one on the basis of the communality of their world tasks brought to the history of the world one hundred years ago.

"But did both peoples understand these tasks, and do they understand them now?

"Even if they had not understood them clearly, they would have striven towards them semi-consciously: if a people is an organism, then in it there must be instincts which subconsciously direct its life purposefully and infallibly, having before it, not death, but life. But there is a force which gave to both the one and the other people an understanding of their world tasks, and the means of their fulfillment. This force is *Orthodoxy.* It alone includes in itself the principles of true Catholicity, and does not suppress nationalities, but presents to each one spiritual freedom without tying its spiritual life to a person, a place or an external discipline, while at the same time it stands higher than all nationalities. By means of undying tradition it preserves a man from confusing freedom with license, from destructive spiritual anarchy, and makes possible in him constant vitality and growth, as of a spiritual organism. Not being tied to a place or time, and including in itself the principles of true democracy and good, healthy cosmopolitanism (in the Orthodox understanding of the Church), Orthodoxy – and only Orthodoxy – serves as a religion having an eternal and global significance, uniting mankind inwardly, and not outwardly. Without suppressing nationalities, it can at the same time become a pan-popular religion in the full sense of the word. And truly it has become the fundamental strength and popular religion both for the Russians and for the Georgians. Outside Orthodoxy both Russians and Georgians cease to be themselves. But in it they find the true guarantee of the preservation of their spiritual personalities under any hostile attacks. For that reason it has become infinitely dear to the hearts of both peoples; for that reason it has so quickly and firmly united both peoples in an unbroken union hitherto unknown in history of state and Church, in spite of the absence of tribal kinship, for kinship according to faith is higher that kinship according to blood, union in the spirit is higher than union in race, and stronger than unions created for the avaricious aims of states. This is a union in life and death, for the present and the future, since it rests on spiritual, age-old foundations. And the eternal and the spiritual give sense to the temporal and make it truly fertile…"[268]

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[268] Vostorgov, "Gruzia i Rossia" (Georgia and Russia), in *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij Protoierea Ioanna Vostorgova* (The Complete Collection of the Works of Protopriest John Vostorgov), Moscow, 1914, vol. 1, pp. 63-67.

16. THE YEDINOVERIE

Although the Old Ritualists were not allowed to have open churches in the eighteenth century, they were not persecuted so long as they did not try to make converts. Some emigrated to the Urals, Siberia, Lithuania and Courland. But the Empress Elizabeth invited those who had gone abroad to return to Russia.

"In 1761," writes S.A. Zenkovsky, "when Peter III came to power, he almost immediately issued a decree forbidding any kind of persecution of the Old Ritualists, which was confirmed in 1762, 1764 and 1784 by Catherine II. She asked the Old Ritualists living abroad to return to the homeland, and tens of thousands of them responded to her appeal, returned to Russia and settled in the Middle and Lower Volga regions and in New Russia, where they were immediately offered large plots of land. The 'schismatics' office' that controlled Old Ritualist affairs was closed, the Old Ritualists received civil rights, and the monasteries of Irgiz on the Lower Volga were opened and became important centres of the Old Ritualist *popovtsi*.

"At the end of the century large Old Ritualist centres were formed in Moscow – the Rogozhsky (*popovtsi*) and Preobrazhensky (*bespopovtsi*), and the Korolevsky in Petersburg. In many cities and village districts there were Old Ritualist (*popovtsi*) churches or chapels in which priests who had come over from the 'dominant' church to Old Ritualism served. To speak of executions or tortures of the Old Ritualists… since 1761 would simply be a distortion of the truth…"[269]

The great hermit, St. Seraphim of Sarov (1754-1833), frequently had cause to lead Old Ritualists to the True Church.

"Four Old Ritualists," writes Archimandrite Lazarus Moore, "once came to him in order to ask him about the Sign of the Cross made with two fingers, and wanting a miracle as evidence of the truth. They had hardly crossed the threshold of his cell, when Father Seraphim read their thoughts, took the first man by the hand, folded his fingers in the Orthodox way and, crossing him, said: 'This is the Christian Sign of the Cross! Pray in this way and tell others to do so. This way of making the Sign of the Cross had been handed down to us by the holy Apostles, but the two-finger way is against holy tradition.'

"And he added with power: 'I beg and implore you to go to the Greek-Russian Church. It is n all the power and glory of God. Like a ship with many masts, sails and a great helm, it is steered by the Holy Spirit. Its good helmsmen are the Doctors of the Church. The Archpastors are the successors of the Apostles. But your chapel is like a small rowing-boat without rudder and oars; it is secured to the ship of our Church and floats behind it. The waves wash over it, and it would have certainly gone down if it had not been secured to the ship.'

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[269] Zenkovsky, "Staroobriadchestvo, Tserkov' i Gosudarstvo" (Old Ritualism, the Church and the State), *Russkoe Vozrozhdenie* (Russian Regeneration), 1987-I, pp. 92-93.

"Another time an Old Ritualist asked him: 'Tell me, old man of God, which faith is the best – the present faith of the Church or the old one?'

"Stop your nonsense,' replied Father Seraphim sharply, contrary to his wont. 'Our life is a sea, the Holy Orthodox Church is our ship, and the Helmsman is the Saviour Himself. If with such a Helmsman, on account of their sinful weakness people cross the sea with difficulty and are not all saved from drowning, where do you expect to get with your little dinghy? And how can you hope to be saved without the Helmsman?'

"Once they brought him a woman whose limbs were so distorted that her knees were bent up to her breast. She had previously been Orthodox, but having married an Old Ritualists, she stopped going to Church. St. Seraphim cured her in front of all the people by anointing her breast and hands with oil from his Icon-lamp, and then ordered her and relations to pray in the Orthodox way.

"'Did some of your now deceased relatives pray with the two-finger Sign of the Cross?'

"'To my great grief, everyone prayed like that in our family.'

"Father Seraphim reflected a little, and then remarked: 'Even though they were virtuous people, they will be bound; the Holy Orthodox Church does not accept this Sign of the Cross.'

"Then he asked: 'Do you know these graves? Go, mother, to their graves, make three prostrations and pray to the Lord that He may release them in eternity.'

"Her living relatives afterwards obeyed Father Seraphim's instructions.

"Another edifying case was that of a woman who had been adopted as a three-year-old orphan by Old Ritualists.

"After their death she first joined their community, but then she started a life of pilgrimage and went from one Elder to another.

"My whole object was to find someone who could teach me, a sinner, how to save my soul. I also had a misgiving. I was in doubt whether I could have my benefactors prayed for in the Orthodox Church.'

"At last she reached Sarov. Reports about Father Seraphim had already spread throughout Russia.

"'I saw a crowd of people preparing to go somewhere. I inquired and was told that they were going to Father Seraphim's hermitage. Though I was very tired from the journey, yet I forgot about res and went with them. I wanted to see the Elder as soon as possible. Having passed the Monastery, we went along a forest path. We had walked about two versts, those who were stronger were ahead, but I was lagging behind and following slowly in the rear. Suddenty I looked to one side and saw an old wizened man, with whitish-looking hair and a bent back, in a white cassock, gathering sticks. I went up to him, and asked him whether it was far to Father Seraphim's hermitage.

"'The Elder put down his faggot, gave me a serene look and asked softly:

"'"What do you want with poor Seraphim, my joy?"

"'Only then did I realize that I was talking to the Elder himself, and threw myself at his feet, and began to ask him to pray for me, unworthy as I was.

"'"Rise, daughter Irene!" said the ascetic, and he bent down to help me up himself. "I was just waiting for you. I did not want you to have come here for nothing, when you are so tired."

"'I was astonished to be called by my name, when he had never seen me before, and I trembled all over with fear; neither could I say a word, but just gazed at his angelic face.'

"Father Seraphim folded her fingers in the Orthodox way and crossed here himself with her hand.

"'Cross yourself like that,' he repeated twice, 'that is how God commands us.'

"And after a short silence he went on: 'As for your benefactors, if you happen to have a copeck, give it without misgiving for them to be commemorated at the proskomedia. It is not a sin!'"[270]

It is against this background that we should view the movement that began among some Old Ritualist communities towards union with the Orthodox on the basis of *Yedinoverie*, or "One Faith" – that is, agreement on dogmas and acceptance of the authority of the Orthodox hierarchy, together with retention of the pre-Nikonian rites.

"The essence of the *Yedinoverie*," writes Archbishop Nikon (Rklitsky), consisted in the fact that the 'one-faithers', while having amongst themselves the priesthood and the fullness of the sacraments, did not at the same time lose their beloved rites, with which they were accustomed to pray to God and to please Him. The first person who had the idea of the *Yedinoverie* was none other than Patriarch Nikon himself. After his Church reforms he allowed the first and most important leader of the Church disturbance that then arose, Gregory Neronov, to carry out Divine services according to the old printed service books and books of needs, and blessed for him 'to increase the alleluias' during his presence in the Dormition cathedral. In this way Patriarch Nikon returned the first schismatic to the Church. Moreover, already after the correction of the Divine service books, Patriarch Nikon published books of the Hours in which the controversial passages were printed in the old way. It is evident that Patriarch Nikon treated this necessary Church reform very rationally and clearly understood that after the danger of the Russian Orthodox Church being torn away from Ecumenical Orthodoxy had been averted by the accomplished Church reform, the old books and rites could be freely allowed for those who attached particular significance to them without at the same time violating the dogmas of the faith.

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[270] Moore, *St. Seraphim of Sarov. A Spiritual Biography,* Blaco, Texas: New Sarov Press, 1994, pp. 234-238.

"It is also known that in the best Russian monasteries of the second half of the 17th century they looked upon the old and new books in the same way and carried out Church services with the ones and the others. There are also indications that in the 18th century, too, the Church took a condescending attitude towards the Church rite practice of the Old Ritualists, and her attention was mainly directed at the dogmas of the faith, and not at rites and books. The strict measures taken by the government, and the formal, bureaucratic attitude of the Synodal administration, together with the striving to achieve unity in rites by means of force put an end to this *rapprochement* and deepened the schism… There is no doubt that the main reasons [for the gradual mutual alienation of the ruling clergy and the Old Ritualists] were not so much religious and ecclesiastical, as political, including the influence of foreign States striving to weaken and disrupt the inner unity of the Russian people…"[271]

"Before 1800," writes K.V. Glazkov, "almost all the Old Ritualist communities had united with the Orthodox Church on their own conditions. Besides, there were quite a few so-called crypto-Old Ritualists, who formally belonged to the ruling Church, but who in their everyday life prayed and lived according to the Old Ritualist ways (there were particularly many of these amidst the minor provincial nobility and merchant class). This state of affairs was evidently not normal: it was necessary to work out definite rules, common for all, for the union of the Old Ritualists with the Orthodox Church. As a result of negotiations with the Muscovite Old Ritualists the latter in 1799 put forward the conditions under which they would agree to accept a priesthood from the Orthodox Church. These conditions, laid out in 16 points, partly represented old rules figuring in the 1793 petition of the Starodub 'agreers', and partly new ones relating to the mutual relations of the 'one-faithers' with the Orthodox Church. These relations required the union of the 'one-faithers' with the Orthodox Church, but allowed for their being to a certain degree isolated. On their basis the Muscovite Old Ritualists submitted a petition to his Majesty for their reunion with the Orthodox Church, and Emperor Paul I wrote at the bottom of this document: 'Let this be. October 27, 1800.' This petition with the royal signature was returned to the Muscovite Old Ritualists and was accepted as complete confirmation of their suggested conditions for union, as an eternal act of the recognition of the equal validity and honour of Old Ritualism and Orthodoxy.

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[271] Rklitsky, *Zhizneopisanie Blazhennejshago Antonia, Mitropolitan Kievskago i Galitskago* (Life of his Beatitude Anthony, Metropolitan of Kiev and Galich), volume 3, New York, 1957, pp. 164-165.

"But on the same day, with the remarks (or so-called 'opinions') of Metropolitan Plato of Moscow, conditions were confirmed that greatly limited the petition of the Old Ritualists. These additions recognized reunited Old Ritualism as being only a transitional stage on the road to Orthodoxy, and separated the 'old-faith' parishes as it were into a special semi-independent ecclesiastical community. Wishing to aid a change in the views of those entering into communion with the Church on the rites and books that they had acquired in Old Ritualism, and to show that the Old Ritualists were falsely accusing the Church of heresies, Metropolitan Plato called the 'agreers' 'one-faithers'…

"The one-faithers petitioned the Holy Synod to remove the curses [of the Moscow Council of 1666-1667] on holy antiquity, but Metropolitan Plato replied in his additional remarks that they were imposed with justice. The Old Ritualists petitioned for union with the Church while keeping the old rites, but Metropolitan Plato left them their rites only for a time, only 'in the hope' that with time the reunited would abandon the old rites and accept the new…

"Amidst the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church the view became more and more established that the 'One Faith' was a transitional step towards Orthodoxy. *But in fact the One Faith implies unity in dogmatic teaching and the grace of the Holy Spirit with the use in the Divine services of various Orthodox rites.* But the old rite continued to be perceived as incorrect, damaged and in no way blessed by the Church, but only 'by condescension not forbidden' for a time."[272]

"The Synodal administration, which was built on formalist foundations, looked on the *yedinoverie* not from a paternal-caring point of view, but only as on a certain group that was constantly making petitions for something, and the Church authorities, in reply to these petitions, constantly restricted them, and regarded them with suspicion and did not satisfy their age-old desire to have a common spiritual father, a [one-faither] bishop.

"Thanks to this situation, the *Yedinoverie* gradually fell into decline and disorder, to the great joy of the hardened schismatics …"[273]

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[272] Glazkov, "K voprosu o edinoverii v sviazi s ego dvukhsotletiem" ("Towards the Question of the 'One Faith' in connection with its 200th anniversary"), *Pravoslavnij Put'* (The Orthodox Way), 2000, pp. 74-75, 76-77.

[273] Rklitsky, op. cit., p. 167.

17. THE MURDER OF TSAR PAUL

In 1798 Napoleon seized Malta. Paul, who was head of the Maltese Order, then entered into an alliance union with Prussia, Austria and England against France. A Russian fleet entered the Mediterranean, and in 1799 a Russian army under Suvorov entered Northern Italy, liberating the territory from the French. However, in 1800, writes Lebedev, "England *seized the island of Malta*, taking it away from the French and not returning it to the Maltese Order. Paul I sent Suvorov with his armies back to Russia and demanded that Prussia take decisive measures against England (the seizure of Hanover), threatening to break relations and take Hanover, the homeland of the English monarchs, with Russian forces. But at the same time there began direct relations between Paul and Napoleon. They began in an unusual manner. Paul challenged Napoleon *to a duel* so as to decide State quarrels by means of a personal contest, without shedding the innocent blood of soldiers. Bonaparte declined from the duel, but had a high opinion of Paul I's suggestion, and as a sign of respect released his Russian prisoners without any conditions, providing them with all that they needed at France's expense. Paul I saw that with the establishment of Napoleon in power, an end had been put to the revolution in France.[274] Therefore he concluded a union with Napoleon against England (with the aim of taking Malta away from her and punishing her for her cunning), and united Russia to the 'continental blockade' that Napoleon had constructed against England, undermining her mercantile-financial might.[275] Moreover, in counsel with Napoleon, Paul I decided [on January 12, 1801] to send a big Cossack corps to India – the most valuable colony of the English.[276] To this day his Majesty's order has been deemed 'mad' and 'irrational'. But those who say this conceal the fact that the plan for this Russian expedition against India did not at all belong to Paul I: it arose under Catherine II and was seriously considered by her (Paul I only put it into action).

"Russia's break with England and the allies signified for them a catastrophe and in any case an irreparable blow to *the British pocket*, and also to *the pocket of the major Russian land-owners* and traders (English trade in Russia had been very strong for a long time!). From the secret *masonic* centres of England and Germany an order was delivered to the Russian Masons *to remove the Emperor* and as quickly as possible![277]

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[274] This was, of course, a great mistake. Napoleon was a child of the revolution and the instrument of the spread of its ideas throughout Europe. (V.M.)

[275] Another mistake, for it did precisely the opposite, weakening the continental economies and allowing England, with her superior navy, to seize the colonies of her rivals around the world. (V.M.)

[276] They had crossed the Volga on March 18 when they heard of the death of the Tsar…

[277] Douglas Smith describes the English involvement as follows: "Paul had recently broken Russia's alliance with Britain in favour of Napoleon's France. He turned on his former ally with a plan to challenge British supremacy on the seas and began seizing their ships in Russian waters and imprisoning their sailors. The emperor even ordered Russian forces to attack the British in India. The British Empire fought back. Just days before Paul's murder, a British fleet sailed into the Baltic Sea heading for St. Petersburg. Only after learning of the regicide, and the new

"Long disturbed by Paul I's attitude, the Russian nobles were quick to respond to the Masonic summons. Even before this,… in 1798 the Russian Masons had succeeded in sowing dissension in the Royal Family. They slanderously accused the Tsaritsa Maria Fyodorovna of supposedly trying to rule her husband and instead of him. At the same time he was 'set up with' the beauty Lopukhina, the daughter of a very powerful Mason, and a faithful plotter. But the affair was foiled through the nobility of the Emperor. Learning that Lopukhina loved Prince Gagarin, Paul I arranged their marriage, since he was just good friends with Lopukhina. The Masons had to save the situation in such a way that Prince Gagarin himself began to help *his own wife* come closer to Paul I. She settled in the Mikhailov palace and became a very valuable agent of the plotters. From the autumn of 1800 the plot rapidly acquired a systematic character. Count N.P. Panin (the college of foreign affairs) was drawn into it, as was General Count Peter Alexeyevich von der Pahlen, the governor of Petersburg and a very close advisor of the Tsar, General Bennigsen (also a German), Admiral Ribas (a native of the island of Malta), the brothers Plato, Nicholas and Valerian Zubov and their sister, in marriage Princes Zherbtsova, the *senators* Orlov, Chicherin, Tatarinov, Tolstoy, Torshchinsky, Generals Golitsyn, Depreradovich, Obolyaninov, Talysin, Mansurov, Uvarov, Argamakov, the officers Colonel Tolbanov, Skaryatin, a certain Prince Yashvil, Lieutenant Marin and very many others (amongst them even General M.I. Kutuzov, one of the prominent Masons of those years). At the head of the conspiracy stood the *English consul* in Petersburg, Sir Charles Whitford. According to certain data, England paid the plotters *two million* rubles in gold through him.

"The most important plotters were the Mason-Illuminati, who acted according to the principle of their founder Weishaupt: 'slander, slander – something will stick!' Floods of slanderous inventions poured onto the head of the Emperor Paul I. Their aim was to 'prove' that he was mad, mentally ill and therefore in the interests of the people (!) and dynasty (!) he could not remain in power. The slander was strengthened by the fact that the Emperor's orders either were not carried out, or were distorted to an absurd degree, or in his name instructions of a crazy character were given out. Von Pahlen was especially successful in this. He began to insinuate to Paul I that his son Alexander Pavlovich (and also Constantine), with the support of the Empress, wanted to cast him from the throne. And when Paul I was upset by these communications, it was insinuated to his sons and Alexander and Constantine that the Emperor by virtue of a paranoid illness was intending to imprison them together with their mother for good, while he was supposedly intending to place the young Prince Eugene of Wurtemburg, who had then arrived in Russia, on the throne. Noble society was frightened by the fact that Paul I in a fit of madness [supposedly] wanted to execute some, imprison others and still others send to Siberia. Pahlen was the person closest to the Tsar and *they could not fail to believe*

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emperor Alexander's pledge of renewed friendship, did the ships turn around" (*Rasputin*, London: Pan Books, 2016, p. 633).

him! While he, as he later confessed, was trying to deceive everyone, including Great Prince Alexander. At first the latter was told that they were talking about removing his father the Emperor from power (because of his 'illness'), in order that Alexander should become regent-ruler. Count N.P. Panin sincerely believed precisely in this outcome of the affair, as did many other opponents of Paul I who had not lost the last trace of humanity. At first Alexander did not at all agree with the plot, and prepared to suffer everything from his father to the end. But Panin, and then Pahlen convinced him that the coup was necessary for *the salvation of the Fatherland!* Alexander several times demanded an oath from the plotters that they would not allow any violence to his father and would preserve his life. These oaths were given, but they lied intentionally, as Pahlen later boasted, only in order to 'calm the conscience' of Alexander.[278] They convinced Constantine Pavlovich in approximately the same way. The coup was marked for the end of March, 1801. Before this Ribas died, and Panin landed up in exile, from which he did not manage to return. The whole leadership of the plot passed to Pahlen, who from the beginning wanted *to kill the Emperor.* Many people faithful to his Majesty knew about this, and tried to warn him. *Napoleon* also heard about all this through his own channels, and hastened to inform Paul I in time…. On March 7, 1801 Paul I asked Pahlen directly about the plot. He confirmed its existence and said that *he himself was standing at the head* of the plotters, since only in this way could he know what was going on and prevent it all at the necessary moment… This time, too, Pahlen succeeded in deceiving the Tsar, but he felt that it would not do that for long, and that he himself 'was hanging by a thread'. He had to hurry, the more so in that many officials, generals and especially all the soldiers were devoted to Paul I. Besides, the Jesuits, who were at war with the *Illuminati*, knew everything about the plot in advance. In the afternoon of March 11, in the Tsar's reception-room, Pater Gruber appeared with a full and accurate list of the plotters and data on the details. But they managed not to admit the Jesuit to an audience with Paul I. Palen told Alexander that his father had already prepared a decree about his and the whole Royal Family's incarceration in the Schlisselburg fortress, and that for that reason it was necessary to act without delay. Detachments of units loyal to Paul I were removed from the Mikhailov castle, where he lived. On March 11, 1801 the father invited his sons Alexander and Constantine and personally asked them whether they had any part in the conspiracy, and, having received a negative reply, considered it necessary that they should swear as it were for a second time to their faithfulness to him as to their Tsar. The sons *swore*, deceptively… On the night of the 11th to 12th of March, 1801, an English ship entered the Neva with the aim of taking the conspirators on board in case they failed. Before that Charles Whitford had been exiled from Russia. Zherebtsova-Zubova was sent to him in England so as to prepare a place for the conspirators there if it proved necessary to flee. On the night of the 12th March up to 60 young officers who had been punished for misdemeanours were assembled at Palen's house and literally pumped with spirits. One of them drunkenly remarked that it would be good for Russia if *all the members of the Royal Family* were slaughtered at once! The rest rejected such an idea with horror, but it spoke volumes! After much drinking they all moved by night across Mars field to the Mikhailov castle. There the brave officers were scared to death by some crows which suddenly took wing at night in an enormous flock and raised a mighty cry. As became clear later, some of the young officers *did not even know* where they were being led and why! But the majority knew. One by one (and frightening each other), they managed to enter in two groups into Paul I's bedroom, having killed one faithful guard, a chamber-hussar at the doors (the second ran for the sentry). Paul I, hearing the noise of a fight, tried to run through a secret door, but a tapestry, 'The School in Athens', a gift from the murdered king and queen of France, fell on top of him. The plotters caught the Tsar. Bennigsen declared to him that they were arresting him and that he had to abdicate from the throne, otherwise they could not vouch for the consequences. The greatly disturbed Paul I did not reply. He rushed to a room where a gun was kept, trying to break out of the ring of his murderers, but they formed a solid wall around him, breathing in the face of the Emperor, reeking of wine and spitefulness. Where had the courtier nobles disappeared! 'What have I done to you?' asked Paul I. 'You have tormented us for four years!' was the reply. The drunken Nicholas Zubov took hold of the Emperor by the hand, but the latter struck the scoundrel on the hand and repulsed him. Zubov took a swing and hit the Tsar on the left temple with a golden snuff-box given by Catherine II, wounding his temple-bone and eyes. Covered with blood, Paul I fell to the ground. The brutalized plotters hurled themselves at him, trampled on him, beat him, suffocated him. Special zeal was displayed by the Zubovs, Skoriatin, Yashvil, Argamakov and, as people think, Pahlen (although there are reasons for thinking that he took no personal part in the fight). At this point the sentries made up of Semenovtsy soldiers faithful to Alexander appeared (the soldiers had not been initiated into the plot). Bennigsen and Pahlen came out to them and said that the Tsar had died from an attack of apoplexy and now his son Alexander was on the throne. Pahlen rushed into Alexander's rooms. On hearing of the death of his father, Alexander sobbed. 'Where is your oath? You promised not to touch my father!' he cried. 'Enough of crying! They're going to lift all of us on their bayonets! Please go out to the people!' shouted Pahlen. Alexander, still weeping, went out and began to say something to the effect that he would rule the state well… The sentries in perplexity were silent. The soldiers could not act against the Heir-Tsarevich, but they could also not understand what had happened. But the simple Russian people, then and later and even now (!) understood well. *To this day* (since 1801) believing people who are being oppressed by the powerful of this world in Petersburg (and recently also in Leningrad) order pannikhidas for 'the murdered Paul', asking for his intercession. And *they receive* what they ask for!...

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[278] Alan Palmer writes: "One of the older conspirators, more sober than the others, pertinently asked the question which Alexander had always ignored: what would happen if the Tsar offered resistance? 'Gentlemen,' Pahlen replied calmly, 'you cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs'. It was an ominous remark, difficult to reconcile with his assurance to Alexander" (*Alexander I,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974, p. 44). Lenin later quoted it... (V.M.)

"And so the plot of the Russian nobles against the Emperor they did not like succeeded. Paul I was killed with *the clear connivance* of his sons. The eldest of them, Alexander, became the Tsar of Russia. In the first hours and days nobody yet suspected how all this would influence the destiny of the country in the future and the personal destiny and consciousness of Alexander I himself. All the plotters had an evil end. Some were removed by Alexander I, others were punished by the Lord Himself. The main regicide Pahlen was quickly removed from all affairs and sent into exile on his estate. There he for a long time *went mad,* becoming completely irresponsible. Nicholas Zubov and Bennigsen also went mad (Zubov began to eat his own excreta). Having falsely accused Paul I of being mentally ill, they themselves became truly mentally ill! God is not mocked. 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay', He said. The joy of the Russian nobility was not especially long-lived. Alexander I and then Nicholas I were nevertheless *sons of their father!* Both they and the Emperors who followed them no longer allowed the nobility to rule them. Immediately the Russian nobility understood this, that is, that they *no longer had any power over the Autocracy*, they began to strive *for the annihilation of the Autocracy in Russia altogether*, which they succeeded in doing, finally, in February, 1917 – true, *to their own destruction!*.. Such was the zig-zag of Russian history, beginning with Catherine I and ending with Nicholas II.

"The reign of Emperor Paul Petrovich *predetermined* the following reigns *in the most important thing*. As we have seen, this Tsar 'turned his face' towards the Russian Orthodox Church, strengthened the foundations of the Autocracy and tried to make it truly of the people. Personally this cost him his life. But thereby the later *foundations* were laid for the State life of Russia in the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries: *'Orthodoxy, Autocracy, Nationality!'* Or, in its military expression – 'For the Faith, the Tsar and the Fatherland!'"[279]

Tsar Paul knew the circumstances and even the exact date of his death beforehand. It was told him by a monk named Abel, who had foretold the date of the Tsar's mother, Catherine the Great. "The prophecy of the clairvoyant monk Abel was completely fulfilled. He personally foretold to the Emperor Paul: 'Your reign will be short, and I, the sinner, see your savage end. On the feast of St. Sophronius of Jerusalem you will receive a martyric death from unfaithful servants. You will be suffocated in your bedchamber by evildoers whom you warm on your royal breast… They will bury you on Holy Saturday… But they, these evildoers, in trying to justify their great sin of regicide, will proclaim that you are mad, and will blacken your good memory.… But the Russian people with their sensitive soul will understand and esteem you, and they will bring their sorrows to your grave, asking for your intercession and the softening of the hearts of the unrighteous and cruel.' This part of the prophecy of Abel was also fulfilled. When Paul was killed, for many years the people came to his grave to pray, and he is considered by many to be an uncanonised saint."[280]

Abel also prophesied important events in the lives of the succeeding tsar, such as the burning of Moscow under Alexander I and the righteous death of Tsar Nicholas II. One of his disciples, Lazar, even painted an icon of the Tsar-

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[279] Lebedev, *Velikorossia,* pp. 245-249.

[280] "Monk Abel 'the Prophet' of Valaam", *The Orthodox Word*, vol. 36, N 1, January-February, 2000.

Martyr, with scenes from his life and death, a full seventy years before his death![281]

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[281] Facebook communication of Vyacheslav Marchenko, September 5, 2019.

18. TSAR ALEXANDER I AND THE LIBERAL DREAM

Alexander's reign started decisively. With a single *ukaz* he "brought profound changes to the country: freedom of the press was restored, as was the right of assembly; political prisoners were released from jail and the right of travel, which had been severely restricted under Paul, was restored. The dreaded Secret Chancellery, in charge of state security, was soon abolished."[282] However, he did not act against his father's murderers, or admit openly that his father had been murdered, for the simple reason that he himself had been an accomplice to the crime. (He had not willed or expected his father's death, but had agreed to take his place on his abdication.) Indeed, he was tormented with guilt for his connivance and the desire to atone for it for the rest of his reign, as the holy Monk Abel had prophesied: "Under him the French will burn down Moscow, but he will take Paris from them and will be called the Blessed. But the tsar's crown will be heavy for him, and he will change the exploit of service as tsar for the exploit of fasting and prayer, and he will be righteous in God's eyes."[283]

The reign of Tsar Alexander can be divided into three phases: a first phase until 1812, when he was strongly influenced by the ideas of the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment, even if he did little to put them into effect in Russia; a second phase from 1812 to about 1822, when the main influence on him was a kind of romantic mysticism; and a third phase until his death, when he returned to True Orthodoxy. Tsar Alexander faced, in a particularly acute form, the problems faced by all the "enlightened despots" of the eighteenth century – that is, how to relieve the burdens of his people without destroying the autocratic system that held the whole country together. Like his fellow despots, Alexander was strongly influenced by the ideals of the French revolution and by the Masonic ferment that had penetrated the nobility of Russia no less than the élites of Western Europe. So it is not surprising that he should have wavered between the strictly autocratic views of his mother the Dowager Empress Maria Fyodorovna, the Holy Synod and the court historian Nicholas Karamzin, on the one hand, and the liberalism of the Masons that surrounded him, on the other.

Nicholas Karamzin was one of the first *intelligenty*, together with the poet Pushkin and the hierarch Philaret of Moscow, who called for a return to Russian traditions in public life, and in particular to the Russian language, after the century of forced westernization since Peter the Great. Karamzin believed that Russia had nothing to be ashamed of by comparison with the West. Nor did he accept the western vogue for republicanism. "Russia was founded through victories and one-man-rule; she perished [at the end of the Kievan period] because of a variety of rulers; and she was saved by the wise autocracy."[284]

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[282] Alexis Troubetskoy, *Imperial Legend,* Staplehurst: Spelmount, 2002, p. 78.

[283] Shabelsky-Bork, in Fomin S., *Rossia pered Vtorym Prishestviem* (Russia before the Second Coming), Sergiev Posad, 1993, p. 121.

[284] Karamzin, "Zapiska o novoj i drevnej Rossii i ee politicheskom i grazhdanskom otnosheniakh" (Note on the new and ancient Russia and her political and civil relations), 1811; in

And yet the autocrat of all the Russias himself had his doubts about autocracy. Only ten days after the death of his father, Alexander returned to the Winter Palace one night to find an anonymous letter on his desk, full of liberal, anti-autocratic sentiments of the kind that Alexander had espoused in his youth.[285] "Is it possible," it asked, "to set aside the hope of nations in favour of the sheer delight of self-rule?… No! He will at last open the book of fate which Catherine merely perceived. He will give us immutable laws. He will establish them for ever by an oath binding him to all his subjects. To Russia he will say, 'Here lie the bounds to my autocratic power and to the power of those who will follow me, unalterable and everlasting.'"

The author turned out to be a member of the chancery staff, Karazin. "There followed," writes Alan Palmer, "an episode which anywhere except Russia would have seemed fantastic. When summoned to the Tsar's presence, Karazin feared a severe rebuke for his presumption. But Alexander was effusively magnanimous. He embraced Karazin warmly and commended his sense of patriotic duty. Karazin, for his part, knelt in tears at Alexander's feet, pledging his personal loyalty. Then the two men talked at length about the problems facing the Empire, of the need to safeguard the people from acts of arbitrary tyranny and to educate them so that they could assume in time the responsibilities of government…"[286]

In 1797 Alexander had written a letter to his Swiss former tutor Frédéric La Harpe which, as well as being indiscreet and disloyal to his father the Tsar, showed his republican sympathies alarmingly clearly: "I think that if ever the time comes for me to reign, rather than go into voluntary exile myself, I had far better devote myself to the task of giving freedom to my country and thereby preventing her from becoming in the future a toy in a madman's hands. I have been in touch with enlightened people who, on their side, have long thought in the same way. In all we are only four in number, that is to say, M. Novosiltsov, Count Stroganov, the young Prince Czartoryski, my aide-de-camp (a young man in a million) and me. Our idea is that during the present reign we should translate into the Russian language as many useful books as is possible, of which we would print as many as would be permitted, and we will reserve others for a future occasion… Once my turn comes, then it will be essential to work, little by little, for a method of representing the nation… let it be by a free constitution, after which my authority will end absolutely and, if Providence seconds our

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N.G. Fyodorovsky, *V poiskakh svoego puti: Rossia mezhdu Evropoj i Aziej* (In Search of her own path: Russia between Europe and Asia), Moscow, 1997, p. 27.

[285] Alexander had once said to his tutor La Harpe, a Swiss republican: "Once… my turn comes, then it will be necessary to work, gradually of course, to create a representative assembly of the nation which, thus directed, will establish a free constitution, after which my authority will cease absolutely" (in Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire 1552-1917*, London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 123).

[286] Palmer, op. cit., p. 50.

endeavours, I will retire into some place and I will live contentedly and happily observing the good fortune of my country and rejoicing in it."[287]

The tsar simultaneously worked to improve and streamline his autocratic system of government and to discuss constitutional ideas that could only undermine the autocracy. Thus "in April, 1801," writes Montefiore, "Alexander created a new Council and replaced Peter the Great's collegia with eight Western-style ministries, reforms that completed Peter's vision of a simplified central government.[288] But his ministers were still the same grandees who had run Russia since Tsar Michael, and he wanted to find his own way, so he appointed [the Polish] Adam Czartoryski and his friends as their deputies. And then secretly he created an Intimate Committee made up of his friends. 'We had the privilege of coming to dine with the emperor without a prior appointment,' recalled Czartoryski. 'Our confabs took place two or three times a week,' then after official dinner and coffee, Alexander would disappear and the four liberals would be led through corridors to reappear in the emperor's salon to discuss a constitution, a semi-elected senate and the abolition of serfdom."[289]

"On June 24, 1801," writes V.F. Ivanov, "the Intimate Committee [*neglasny komitet*] opened its proceedings. Alexander called it, on the model of the revolution of 1789, 'the Committee of public safety' [*Komitet Gosudarstvennoj Bezopasnosti* – KGB for short], and its opponents from the conservative camp – 'the Jacobin gang'.

"There began criticism of the existing order and of the whole government system, which was recognized to be 'ugly'. The firm and definite conclusion was reached that 'only a constitution can muzzle the despotic government'".[290]

However, Alexander's coronation in September, 1801, in Moscow, the heart of Old Russia with its autocratic traditions, pulled him in the opposite direction to the liberal ideas of St. Petersburg. "After being anointed with Holy Oil by the Metropolitan, Alexander swore a solemn oath to preserve the integrity of the Russian lands and the sacred concept of autocracy; and he was then permitted, as one blessed by God, to pass through the Royal Doors into the Sanctuary where the Tsars had, on this one occasion in their lives, the privilege of administering to themselves the Holy Sacrament. But Alexander felt unworthy to exercise the priestly office in this way; and, as [Metropolitan] Platon offered him the chalice, he knelt to receive communion as a member of the laity. Although only the higher clergy and their acolytes witnessed this gesture of humility, it was soon known in the city at large and created a deep impression of the new Tsar's sense of spiritual discipline."[291]

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[287] Palmer, op. cit., p. 35.

[288] According to Trubetskoy, "The emperor continued as chief legislator as well as chief executive. The new ministries consolidated their functions surprisingly quickly, and the overall efficiency of government improved significantly. An imperial bureaucracy had now been established that functioned reasonably well until 1917" op. cit., p. 80). (V.M.)

[289] Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, p. 283.

[290] Ivanov, op. cit., p. 246.

However, it was not until his father's murderers had been marginalized, and particularly their leader, Count von Pahlen, has been exiled from court in June, 1802 that Alexander put away all thought of a constitution – for the time being.

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Meanwhile, High Society continued to be ruled by the ideas, not of Holy Rus', but of the Masonic lodge: almost all the leaders of society were Masons…

"The movement was encouraged," writes Janet Hartley, "by the rumours, which cannot be substantiated, that Alexander I became a mason (he certainly visited lodges in Russia and Germany)[292]; his younger brother Constantine certainly was a mason. Regional lodges continued to flourish and young army officers who accompanied Russian forces through Europe in 1813 and 1814 also attended, and were influenced by, lodges in the territory through which they passed. The constitutions of secret societies which were formed by army officers in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars, like the Order of the Russian Knights and the Union of Salvation and Welfare, copied some of their rules and hierarchical organization from masonic lodges. In 1815, the higher orders of masonry in Russia were subordinated to the Astrea grand lodge."[293]

In January, 1800 A.F. Labzin opened the "Dying Sphinx" lodge in Petersburg. The members of the order were sworn to sacrifice themselves and all they had to the aims of the lodge, whose existence remained a closely guarded secret. In 1806 Labzin founded *The Messenger of Zion* as the vehicle of his ideas. Suppressed at first by the Church hierarchy, it was allowed to appear by Prince Golitsyn in 1817.

"*The Messenger of Zion*," writes Walicki, "preached the notion of 'inner Christianity' and the need for a moral awakening. It promised its readers that once they were morally reborn and vitalized by faith, they would gain supra-rational powers of cognition and be able to penetrate the mysteries of nature, finding in them a key to a superior revelation beyond the reach of the Church.

"Labzin's religion was thus a nondenominational and anti-ecclesiastical Christianity. Men's hearts, he maintained, had been imbued with belief in Christ on the first day of creation; primitive pagan peoples were therefore closer to true Christianity than nations that had been baptized but were blinded by the false values of civilization. The official Church was only an assembly of lower-category Christians, and the Bible a 'silent mentor who gives symbolic indications to the living teacher residing in the heart'. All dogmas, according to Labzin, were merely human inventions: Jesus had not desired men to think alike, but only to act justly. His words 'Come unto Me all ye that labor and are heavy laden' showed that he did not mean to set up any intermediate hierarchy between the believers and God."[294]

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[291] Palmer, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

[292] Richard Rhoda writes: "The tradition exists that Alexander became a Mason in 1803 and there is evidence that he was the member of a lodge in Warsaw" ("Russian Freemasonry: A New Dawn", paper read at Orient Lodge N 15 on June 29, 1996, http://members.aol.com/houltonme/ru.htm). (V.M.) But, as we shall see, he later repented and banned Masonry. (V.M.)

[293] Hartley, *A Social History of the Russian Empire, 1650-1825*, London and New York: Longman, 1999, pp. 233-235. "Astrea" is the goddess of justice (O.F. Soloviev, *Masonstvo v Mirovoj Politike XX Veke* (Masonry in World Politics in the 20th Century), Moscow, 1998, p. 23).

In 1802 A.A. Zherebtsov opened the "United Friends" lodge in Petersburg. Its aim was "to remove between men the distinctions of races, classes, beliefs and views, and to destroy fanaticism and superstition, and annihilate hatred and war, uniting the whole of humanity through the bonds of love and knowledge."[295]

Then there was the society of Count Grabianka, "The People of God". "The aim of the society was 'to announce at the command of God the imminent Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and his glorious reign upon earth' and to prepare the humble and faithful souls for the approaching Kingdom of God. 'As in the Rosecrucian lodges,' writes Sokolskaia, 'in the lodge of Count Grabianka people indulged, besides theosophy, in alchemy and magic. But while asserting that the brothers of the "Golden Rose Cross" had as their object of study 'white, Divine magic', the leaders of the Rosecrucians accused the followers of Count Grabianka of indulging in reading books of black magic and consorting with evil spirits. In sorrow at the lack of firmness of these brothers, who had become enmeshed in a new teaching, the leaders wrote: 'Those who are known to us are wavering on their path and do not know what to join. And – God have mercy on them! – they are falling into the hands of evil magicians or *Illuminati*…'"[296]

According to Fr. Georges Florovsky, "Freemasonry did not signify a passing episode, but rather a developmental stage in the history of modern Russian society. Toward the end of the 1770s freemasonry swept though nearly the entire educated class. In any case, the system of Masonic lodges, with all its branches, extended throughout that class.

"… No distinctions or divisions existed between 'freemasons' and 'Voltairians'. The mystical current in freemasonry emerged somewhat later… The circle of Moscow Rosicrucians became the most important and influential amng the Russian freemasonic centers of the time."[297]

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[294] Andrzej Walicki, *A History of Russian Thought,* Oxford: Clarendon, 1988, p. 73.
[295] Ivanov, op. cit., p. 247.
[296] Ivanov, op. cit., p. 249.
[297] Florovksy, *Ways of Russian Theology,* Belmont, Mass.: Nordland, 1979, p. 149.

19. TILSIT: SUMMIT OF THE EMPERORS

St. Petersburg and Moscow, liberalism and autocracy, the false "inner church" of Masonry and the True Church of Orthodoxy: these were the forces that divided Tsar Alexander's heart between them, making his reign a crossroads in Russian history. Finally he was forced to make his choice for Orthodoxy by the appearance in Russia of that incarnation of the despotic essence of the supposedly democratic revolution – Napoleon.

Tsar Paul had been murdered with the connivance of the English ambassador in St. Petersburg, Sir Charles Whitworth. Knowing this, Alexander "did not trust the British…, and much that Consul Bonaparte was achieving in France appealed to his own political instincts. Provided Napoleon had no territorial ambitions in the Balkans or the eastern Mediterranean, Alexander could see no reason for a clash of interests between France and Russia. The Emperor's 'young friends' on the Secret Committee agreed in general with him rather than with [the Anglophile] Panin, and when Alexander discussed foreign affairs with them during the late summer of 1801, they received the impression that he favoured settling differences with France as a preliminary to a policy of passive isolation."[298]

However, the influence of Napoleon on Alexander began to wane after the Russian Emperor's meeting with the Prussian king Frederick William and his consort Queen Louise in June, 1802. The closeness of the two monarchs threatened to undermine the Tsar's policy of splendid isolation from the affairs of Europe, and alarmed his foreign minister Kochubey, as well as annoying the French. But isolation was no longer a practical policy as Napoleon continued to encroach on the rights of the German principalities, and so Alexander replaced his foreign minister and, in May, 1803, summoned General Arakcheev (known as "the Uniformed Ape") to strengthen the Russian army…

In 1804 the Duc d'Enghien was kidnapped by French agents, tried and executed as a traitor. (It was of this act that Talleyrand made the famous remark: "It was worse than a crime. It was a mistake!') "Alexander was enraged by the crime. The Duc d'Enghien was a member of the French royal house. By conniving at his kidnapping and execution the First Consul became, in Alexander's eyes, a regicide. Nor was this the only cause of the Tsar's indignation. He regarded the abduction of the Duke from Baden as a particular insult to Russia, for Napoleon had been repeatedly reminded that Alexander expected the French authorities to respect the lands of his wife's family. His response was swift and dramatic. A meeting of the Council of State was convened in mid-April at which it was resolved, with only one dissentient voice, to break off all diplomatic contact with France. The Russian Court went into official mourning and a solemn note of protest was dispatched to Paris.

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[298] Palmer, op. cit., pp. 63-64.

"But the French paid little regard to Russian susceptibilities. Napoleon interpreted Alexander's complaint as unjustified interference with the domestic affairs and internal security of France. He entrusted the reply to Talleyrand, his Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a bland statement appeared in the official *Moniteur:* 'If, when England prepared the assassination of Paul I, the Russian Government had discovered that the organizers of the plot were no more than a league away from the frontier, would it not have seized them at once?' No allusion could have been better calculated to wound the Tsar than this deliberate reference to the circumstances of his own accession. It was a rhetorical question which he found hard to forgive or forget. A month later news came from Paris that the First Consul had accepted from the French Senate the title of Emperor. Now, to all his other transgressions, Napoleon had added contempt for the dynastic principle. Resolutely the successor of Peter the Great refused to acknowledge the newest of empires."[299]

Alexander now formed a defensive alliance with Austria and Prussia against France (there were extensive negotiations with Britain, too, but no final agreement was reached). The Tsar and his new foreign minister, the Polish Mason Adam Czartoryski, added an interesting ideological element to the alliance. "No attempt would be made to impose discredited regimes from the past on lands liberated from French military rule. The French themselves were to be told that the Coalition was fighting, not against their natural rights, but against a government which was 'no less a tyranny for France than the rest of Europe'. The new map of the continent must rest on principles of justice: frontiers would be so drawn that they coincided with natural geographical boundaries, provided outlets for industries, and associated in one political unit 'homogeneous peoples able to agree among themselves'."[300]

Appealing to peoples over the heads of their rulers, and declaring that states should be made up of homogeneous ethnic units were, of course, innovative steps, derived from the French revolution, which presented considerable dangers for multi-ethnic empires such as the Russian and the Austrian. Similarly new and dangerous was the idea that the nation was defined by blood alone. None of these ideological innovations appealed to the other nations, and the Coalition (including Britain) that was eventually patched up in the summer of 1805 was motivated more by Napoleon's further advances in Italy than by a common ideology.

In 1805 the British defeated Napoleon on sea at Trafalgar. However, it was a different story on land. At Austerlitz in the same year the Austrians were crushed and sued for peace; the Russians remained in the war, but lost between 25,000 and 30,000 men killed, wounded or captured – a serious blow to Alexander, whose retinue had assured him of victory. And this was only the beginning. In 1806 Napoleon routed the Prussians at Jena and Auerstadt, and in 1807, after an indecisive but bloody conflict at Eylau, he defeated the Russians at

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[299] Palmer, op. cit., pp. 81-82.

[300] Palmer, op. cit., p. 84.

Friedstadt. Alexander had suffered huge losses, and almost the whole of Europe up to the borders of Russia was in the hands of the French. Napoleon was now at the peak of his power.

With the Prussians out of the war, and the Russians hurting badly, Napoleon and Tsar Alexander met in mid-river at Tilsit on the Prussian-Russian border…

Two religious events of the year 1806 gave a deeper and darker background to the summit of the emperors. In France Napoleon re-established the Jewish Sanhedrin, which then proclaimed him the Messiah. Partly in response to this, the Holy Synod of the Russian Church called Napoleon the antichrist, declaring that he was threatening "to shake the Orthodox Greco-Russian Church, and is trying by a diabolic invasion to draw the Orthodox into temptation and destruction". It said that during the revolution Napoleon had bowed down to idols and to human creatures. Finally, "to the greater disgrace of the Church of Christ he has thought up the idea of restoring the Sanhedrin, declaring himself the Messiah, gathering together the Jews and leading them to the final uprooting of all Christian faith".[301] He was "the Beast of the Apocalypse", said Alexander, the diabolic enemy of Orthodoxy and the champion of the Jews.[302]

In view of this unprecedented anathema, and the solemn pledges he had made to the King of Prussia, it would seem to have been unthinkable for Alexander to enter into alliance with Napoleon at this time. And yet this is precisely what he did. "Alliance between France and Russia," he said, "has always been a particular wish of mine and I am convinced that this alone can guarantee the welfare and peace of the world".

"'I desire that a close union between our two nations may repair past evils,' Alexander instructed Prince Dmitri Lobanov-Rostovsky, his envoy to Napoleon. 'An entirely new system… and I flatter myself Emperor Napoleon and I will understand each other easily provided we deal without intermediaries.' They agreed to meet at Tilsit, where their engineers erected a white pavilion on a specially constructed raft in the middle of the Niemen river, the border between their empires. 'Few sights will be more interesting,' wrote Napoleon. He was right. The division of Europe between two emperors, based on an expedient friendship, made this one of the most famous summits in history.

"As Alexander prepared to meet his vanquisher, accompanied by [his brother, Grand Duke] Constantine, he was under no illusions. 'Bonaparte claims I'm only an idiot,' he soon afterwards wrote to his sister Catiche [Grand Duchess Catherine Pavlovna]. 'He who laughs last laughs best! And I put all my hope in God.' After his disastrous rush for glory, Alexander was entering a long game. He could hardly believe what was about to happen, as he told Catiche: 'Me, spending my days with Bonaparte! Whole hours in tête-à-tête with him!'

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[301] Ivanov, op. cit., p. 260. Cf. Cronin, *Napoleon*, London: HarperCollins, 1994, p. 315; Palmer, op. cit., pp. 126-127.

[302] Montefiore, op. cit., p. 289.

Alexander's practice in duplicity qualified him well for the seduction of Napoleon. 'He possessed to a high degree,' wrote his courtier Baron Korff, 'the facility to subordinate men to himself and penetrate their souls while hiding all his own feelings and thoughts.'

"On 13 June, Napoleon was rowed across to the raft so that he was there to meet Alexander when he disembarked from his side. The two men embraced, then Alexander said, 'I will be your second against the English.' Napoleon was delighted. 'Those words changed everything.' They turned together and disappeared through the pavilion door surmounted with Russian and French eagles and elaborate 'A's and 'N's', to talk for two hours in French without interpreters. Alexander pleaded for Prussia, which he wished to save not only out of chivalry for its queen [Louise, to whom he was close] but as an essential ally.

"The younger emperor, still only twenty-nine, was 'not dazzled by false confidence' but was happy to learn from 'this extraordinary man' who 'liked to show me his superiority in imaginative sallies'. For his part, Napoleon, the elder at thirty-eight, could not help but be a little patronizing, yet he was utterly charmed. 'My dear, I've just seen Emperor Alexander and I'm very pleased with him, a very handsome, good and young emperor,' he told Empress Josephine. 'More intelligent than is commonly thought,' he later decided, 'it would be hard to have more wit than Alexander, but there's a piece missing and I can't discover which.' Alexander was somewhat seduced by the genius of his era. Napoleon's 'light-grey eyes', he later recalled, 'gaze at you so piercingly that you cannot withstand them.'

"On the second day, Frederick William was allowed to sit in silently on their discussions, when he no doubt learned that Prussia was to be harshly diminished. After the meeting, a hundred guns saluted and Alexander joined Napoleon in Tilsit. Each night, the three monarchs dined together, with Napoleon and Alexander bored to tears by the lumpish Prussian; they would say good night – and then, like a secret assignation, Alexander would steal back to join Napoleon for long talks into the night.

"Alexander sought peace without losing honour or territory. Napoleon sought mastery over Europe with a junior partner. These sons of the Enlightenment were dreamers as well as pragmatists. War, Napoleon explained, was not 'a difficult art' but 'a matter of hiding fear as long as possible. Only by this means is one's enemy intimidated and success not in doubt.' Alexander praised effective republics and criticized hereditary monarchy which he regarded as irrational – except in Russia, where local conditions made it essential. Napoleon, the parvenu emperor who had been elected by plebiscite to the throne of a guillotined king, defended heredity to the dynastic autocrat who had acquiesced in paternal regicide. 'Who is fit to be elected?' asked Napoleon. 'A Caesar, an Alexander only comes along once a century, so that election must be a matter of chance.'

"'At Tilsit, I chattered away,' admitted Napoleon. As the two of them bargained over new kingdoms and spheres, Alexander asked for Constantinople. 'Constantinople is the empire of the world,' replied Napoleon gnomically. 'I called the Turks barbarians and said they ought to be turned out of Europe,' he recalled. He played on Alexander's fantasies, suggesting a joint march eastwards to take Constantinople and then attack British India. 'But I never intended to do so,' Napoleon admitted later. Alexander, who understood the game, later called this 'the language of Tilsit'.

"In 25 June, Lobanov, Paul's minister Kurakin and Talleyrand signed the Treaty of Tilsit. Alexander lost no territory but relinquished the Ionian Islands and Wallachia and Moldavia, recognized Napoleon's brothers as kings of Westphalia and Naples, and promised to blockade England. Prussia suffered grievously, but Alexander refused to annex Prussian Poland. Instead, Napoleon created a grand duchy of Warsaw, a possible Polish base against Russia.

"'God has saved us,' Alexander boasted to Catiche.

"'As long as I live, I shan't get used to knowing you pass your days with Bonaparte,' Catiche replied. 'It seems like a bad joke.' A worse joke was mooted. Napoleon's marriage with Josephine was childless so, keen to found his own dynasty, he contemplated divorce. Talleyrand sounded out Alexander about a marriage to Catiche, who was already considering matrimony with another suitor, Emperor Francis of Austria, but the tsar thought him dull – and dirty. 'Then I can wash him,' replied Catiche, who added that he certainly would not be dull after marrying her. When Napoleon was mentioned, 'I wept hot tears like a calf,' she admitted. 'Princes are of two kinds – worthy people with scant brains and clever ones but of hateful character.' The former were preferable but 'if the divorce came about' and Napoleon asked for her, she 'owed that sacrifice to the State'. Napoleon was not yet single – but Catiche, to avoid him, had to marry fast.

"As they parted, Alexander invited Napoleon to St. Petersburg: 'I'll order his quarters warmed to Egyptian heat.' The summit resembled one of those short love affairs in which both lovers promise eternal love even though both know they will ultimately return to their real lives. Looking back at the end of his life, Napoleon reflected that 'Perhaps I was happiest at Tilsit.' As for Alexander, his days with Napoleon seemed 'like a dream', he told Catiche. 'It's past midnight and he's just left. Oh I wish you could have witnessed all that happened.' But given his appalling hand, 'Instead of sacrifices, we got out of the struggle with a little short of lustre.'"[303]

Catiche was having none of it: "We shall have made huge sacrifices and for what?... I wish to see [Russia] respected not in words but in reality, since she certainly has the means and right to do so. While I live I shall not get used to the idea of knowing that you pass your days with Bonaparte. When people say so, it seems like a bad joke and impossible. All the coaxing he has tried on this nation is only so much deceit, for the man is a blend of cunning, ambition and pretence…"[304]

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[303] Montefiore, op. cit., pp. 289-292.

The Prussians, too, were dismayed at Alexander's betrayal of their recently signed treaty with him. Queen Louise of Prussia, who was very close to Alexander, wrote to him: "You have cruelly deceived me". And it is hard not to agree with her since, with Alexander's acquiescence, Napoleon took most of the Prussian lands and imposed a heavy indemnity on the Prussians, while Alexander took a part of what had been Prussian territory in Poland, the province of Bialystok. The only concession Alexander was able to wring from the Corsican was that King Frederick should be restored to the heart of his greatly reduced kingdom "from consideration of the wishes of His Majesty the Emperor of All the Russias".

This concession would serve him well when he needed to team up again with the Prussians in 1813. And he insisted to the Prussian king: "[Napoleon] will break his own neck. Despite all my performance and external behaviour, I am your friend and hope to prove that to you by my actions."[305]

"As the days went by with no clear news from Tilsit," writes Palmer, "the cities of the Empire were again filled with alarming rumours, as they had been after Austerlitz: was Holy Russia to be sold to the Antichrist? For, whatever the fashion on the Niemen, in St. Petersburg and Moscow the Church still thundered on Sundays against Bonaparte."[306] Metropolitan Platon of Moscow wrote to the Tsar warning him not to trust Napoleon, whose ultimate aim was to subjugate the whole of Europe.[307] In other letters, Platon compared Napoleon to Goliath and to "the Pharaoh, who will founder with all his hosts, just as the other did in the Red Sea".[308]

Of course, in view of his crushing military defeats, Alexander was in a weak position at Tilsit. Nevertheless, he did not have to enter into alliance with napoleon or legitimize his conquests, especially since Napoleon did not (at that time) plan to invade Russia. Nor did he have to damage Russian commerce by joining Napoleon's "Continental System" against England, "a major miscalculation… For the merchants of Petersburg and Riga his secret pledge at Tilsit was an error of judgement they found hard to forgive."[309]

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[304] Palmer, op. cit., p. 139.

[305] Tsar Alexander, in Dominic Lieve, *Russia against Napoleon,* London: Penguin, 2016, p. 55.

[306] Palmer, op. cit., p. 138.

[307] Papmehl, op. cit., p. 84.

[308] Papmehl, op. cit., p. 125.

[309] Palmer, op. cit., p. 140.

To explain Alexander's behaviour, which went against the Church, his Allies and his own mother, the Dowager-Empress, it is not sufficient to point to the liberal ideas of his youth, although those undoubtedly played a part. It is necessary to point also to a personal (or demonic) factor, the *romantically seductive* powers of that truly antichristian figure, Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon had seduced a whole generation of young people in Europe and America; so it is hardly surprising that the Tsar should also have come under his spell. But rarely could such a seduction have had such profound geopolitical consequences – if the seducer had not over-reached himself in 1812…

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"Of all the treaties that Napoleon concluded," writes Tim Blanning, "it was Tilsit that most clearly revealed his insatiability. No sooner was the ink dry than he was seeking to expand his power into the Russian zone of interest. He gave the Turks covert assistance in their war with Russia, underway since 1806, and also sought to extend his influence over Persia. Closer to home, he expanded his empire by annexing to France the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Hanover, the Grand Duchy of Berg, Hamburg, Bremen and Lubeck and also occupied the Duchy of Oldenburg. This last action was a particularly provocative breach of the Treaty of Tilsti, for the current duke was Tsar Alexander I's brother-in-law. The choice by the Swedes of Marshal Bernadotte as heir and regent to their childless king in 1811 was interpreted by the Russians as a further French incursion into the Baltic, although in fact Napoleon deeply – and correctly – mistrusted the new Crown Prince.

"More fundamental was the running sore that was the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, whose status as a French satellite was underlined when it was allocated the lion's share of Austrian Poland by the Treaty of Schõnbrunn in 1809. Perhaps more fundamental still was the economic issue: Russia simply could not survive without British markets and British shipping. Between 1802 and 1806 Russia had sent to Britain 91 per cent of its flax exports, 77 per cent of tallow, 73 per cent of hemp, 42 per cent of linen and ever 71 per cent of iron. During those years more than half of all ships docking at St. Petersburg were British. When they stopped oming, goods piled up on the quayside and prices collapsed. The main victims were the Russian magnate, whose estates relied on exporting cash crops. Alexander I was of course uncomfortably aware that it was just this class that the assassins of both his father and grandfather had come. By the end of 1810 the blockade had been abandoned. Within a year, the number of ships arriving at Kronstadt had doubled…"[310]

Meanwhile, the two emperors continued to flirt with each other. Montefiore continues the story: "While society plotted against his French policy, Alexander welcomed Napoleon's ambassadors, first Savary, duc de Rovigo, and then Armand de Caulincourt, duc de Vicenza, as if these Bonapartist henchmen were his friends. Then, as chinks started to show in French invincibility, Napoleon invited Alexander as his star guest at a new summit.

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[310] Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory. Europe 1648-1815,* London: Penguin, 2008, pp. 662-663.

"'My Alexander,' wrote his mother, begging him not to go, 'you're guilty of criminal self-deception.'

"'We will do everything to prove the sincerity' of Russia's 'tight alliance with France, this fearful colossus,' replied Alexander to his mother – until 'the moment when we will calmly observe his fall. The wisest policy is to await the right moment to take measures.' He could only follow 'the indications of my conscience, my essential conviction, the desire that has never left me to be useful to my country.'

"On 17 September 1808, Alexander… was greeted by Napoleon five miles outside Erfurt. As well as the two emperors, there were four kings and a constellation of other German princes attending this three-week demonstration of the panoply of Napoleonic power – but it was all about Russia and France. During their eighteen days together, the two emperors banqueted, hunted, danced and attended illuminations and the theatre: when one of the actors onstage in the play *Oedipus* declaimed 'A great man's friendship is the gift of the gods', Alexander turned and presented his hand to Napoleon to the applause of the entire audience. Napoleon, a born actor himself, half admired Alexander's Thespian talents, calling him the 'Talma of the North' after the top French actor.

"But Napoleon grumbled because Alexander had become 'stubborn as a mule'. Alexander was treated to his first Napoleonic tantrum, with the imperial foot stamping on the imperial hat. 'You're violent and I am stubborn,' said Alexander. 'Let us talk and be reasonable – or I leave.' Napoleon noticed that 'he plays deaf when things are said he is reluctant to hear.' Alexander was slightly deaf, but there was plenty he did not wish to hear. The Russians disliked the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and Napoleon's Continental System, a blockade of British trade which was damaging the Russian economy. Alexander took the opportunity to demand rewards. Napoleon offered Russia the very same titbits offered by Hitler to Stalin in similar circumstances in 1939: Moldavia and Wallachia 'as part of the Russian empire' and Finland, then a Swedish duchy. 'It's not right that the beauties of Petersburg should be interrupted by Swedish cannon', Napoleon generously reflected. In return, Alexander promised to uphold the Continental System against Britain and support Napoleon if attacked by Austria.

"Yet Alexander's vision of himself as a European crusader was encouraged by a traitor at the heart of Napoleon's court. Napoleon had recently sacked his foreign minister, the lame and reptilian Talleyrand. He still admired 'the man with the most ideas, the most flair', though he had recently called him 'shit in a silk stocking' to his face. Now appointed to the sinecure office of vice-grand-elector, Talleyrand secretly betrayed him to the tsar – for cash. 'Sire, it is up to you to save Europe,' he told Alexander, 'and you won't manage unless you resist Napoleon. The French people are civilized, their sovereign is not; the sovereign of Russia is civilized, but his people are not. Thus it is up to the sovereign of Russia to be the ally of the French people.'

"Napoleon had one more demand. 'I tell you of one of the most grievous plights in which I ever found myself,' Alexander told Catiche. 'Napoleon is obtaining a divorce and casting an eye on Anne.' Their youngest sister Annette was just fourteen. 'Mother,' wrote Alexander, 'showed more calm over it than I should have believed.' Maria concluded, 'How wretched would the child's existence be united to a man of villainous character to whom nothing is sacred and without restraint since he does not believe in God? And would this sacrifice profit Russia? All of that makes me shudder.' Alexander thought 'the right course is hard to choose.' Napoleon did not realize the Russians regarded him as a fiend. 'I'm happy with Alexander: I think he is with me,' he told Josephine. 'Were he a woman, I think I'd make him my lover.'

"That love was soon to be tested. After his return, Alexander was more interested in promoting reform at home and seizing his own prizes abroad to rescue his damaged prestige. He launched his Swedish war to gobble up the Swedes' province of Finland which would safeguard the approaches to Petersburg. By February 1808, the Russian troops were floundering so Alexander sent in Arakcheev. The Vampire reorganized the armies, enabling Alexander's best generals, the dependable Mikhail Barclay de Tolly and the ferocious Prince Bagration, to cross the ice and assault Stockholm. The Swedes agreed to cede Finland, which became a Russian grand duchy until 1917. 'The peace is perfect' Alexander boasted to Catiche, 'and absolutely the one I wanted. I cannot thank the Supreme Being enough.'

"Napoleon now discovered the limits of his Russian alliance. In April 1809, Emperor Francis again went to war against Napoleon. Alexander fulfilled his promises by despatching 70,000 troops but with instructions not to help the French in the slightest. 'It's not an alliance I have here,' fulminated Napoleon. 'I've been duped.' At Wagram, Napoleon defeated the Austrians.

"In November, Napoleon offered Alexander a settlement of the Polish question – in return for his own betrothal to Annette. 'My sister could not do better,' said the tsar to Caulaincourt. Alexander started negotiating a 'reciprocal agreement never to permit the re-establishment of Poland'. The French agreed, but when Alexander insisted that Annette could not marry for two years, Napoleon reneged on the Polish deal, and instead married Emperor Francis's daughter Archduchess Marie-Louise. Annette was saved from the Corsican ogre, but the Romanovs had been insulted.

"As for Napoleon, he started to despise Alexander with that special hatred reserved for the beloved mistress who ends a cherished affair. Napoleon insulted him as 'a shifty Byzantine' and 'a Greek of the lower empire, fake as a coin'... Yet every ruler in Europe had to dissemble their real views and compromise with Napoleon: it was Napoleon's Icaran vanity that deluded him into believing that any of them meant their diplomatic expressions of loyalty. Alexander was a pragmatist living (and trying to stay alive and on his throne) in dangerous times who survived because of that same versatility which others might call dissembling. 'His personality is by nature well meaning, sincere and loyal, and his sentiments and principles are elevated,' observed Caulaincourt, 'but beneath all this there exists an acquired royal dissimulation and a dogged persistence that nothing will overcome.'

"Alexander and Napoleon were now preparing for war…"[311]

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[311] Montefiore, *The Romanovs,* pp. 292-296.

20. ALEXANDER, NAPOLEON AND SPERANSKY

Alexander had two formidable spy-masters in Paris: Karl Nesselrode and Alexander Chernyshev. They warned him early in 1810 that Napoleon was preparing to invade Russia. On the other hand, some people thought that Napoleon had, if not a spy, at any rate an ideological sympathizer, in St. Petersburg: Mikhail Speransky, the son of a village priest who had studied for the priesthood and who became justice minister and then the tsar's State Secretary. Speransky was a great admirer of Napoleon's Civil Code. Karamzin noted, however: "Russia really does not need solemnly to acknowledge her ignorance before all of Europe and to bend greying heads over a volume devised by a few perfidious lawyers and Jacobins. Our political principles do not find inspiration in Napoleon's Code of Laws, nor in an encyclopaedia published in Paris, but in another encyclopaedia infinitely older, the Bible…"[312]

Napoleon and Speransky had met at Erfurt, where Napoleon "did not miss the opportunity to discuss with him in detailed conversations various questions of administration. The result of these conversations was a whole series of outstanding projects of reform, of which the most important was the project of a constitution for Russia."[313]

Opinions are sharply divided on Speransky. Some see in him an evil genius, a conscious or unconscious tool of the Masons in their plans to destroy Russia, while others see him as a brilliant reformer, the innocent (and somewhat naïve) victim of jealousy and intrigue on the part of the nobility. At this distance in time it is difficult to be confident which hypothesis is correct; so we will cite two authorities adhering to opposite sides of the argument.

Let us begin with the case for the prosecution. V. F. Ivanov writes: "The plan for a transformation of the State was created by Speransky with amazing speed, and in October, 1809 the whole plan was on Alexander's desk. This plan reflected the dominant ideas of the time, which were close to what is usually called 'the principles of 1789'…

"The plot proceeded, led by Speransky, who was supported by Napoleon.

"After 1809 stubborn rumours circulated in society that Speransky and Count N.P. Rumyantsev were more attached to the interests of France than of Russia.

"Karamzin in his notes and conversations tried to convince Alexander to stop the carrying out of Speransky's reforms, which were useless and would bring only harm to the motherland.

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[312] Karamzin, in Alexis S. Troubtezkoy, *Imperial Legend. The Disappearance of Tsar Alexander I*, Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2003, p. 85).

[313] Professor Theodore Shiman, *Alexander I*, Moscow, 1908, **in** Ivanov, op. cit., p. 255.

"Joseph de Maistre saw in the person of Speransky a most harmful revolutionary, who was undermining the foundations of all state principles and was striving by all means to discredit the power of the Tsar.

"For two years his Majesty refused to believe these rumours and warnings. Towards the beginning of 1812 the enemies of Speransky in the persons of Arakcheev, Shishkov, Armfeldt and Grand Duchess Catherine Pavlovna convinced his Majesty of the correctness of the general conviction of Speransky's treachery.

"The following accusations were brought against Speransky: the incitement of the masses of the people through taxes, the destruction of the finances and unfavourable comments about the government.

"A whole plot to keep Napoleon informed was also uncovered. Speransky had been entrusted with conducting a correspondence with Nesselrode, in which the main French actors were indicated under pseudonyms. But Speransky did not limit himself to giving this information: on his own, without authorization from above, he demanded that all secret papers and reports from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should be handed over to him. Several officials were found who without objections carried out his desire….

"Then from many honourable people there came warnings about the traitrous activities of Speransky.

"At the beginning of 1812 the Swedish hereditary prince Bernadotte, who was in opposition to Napoleon, informed Petersburg that 'the sacred person of the Emperor is in danger' and that Napoleon was ready with the help of a big bribe to establish his influence in Russia again."

In 1810 an *Illuminati* lodge, "Polar Star", was opened by the German Lutheran and pantheist mystic Professor I.A. Fessler, whom Speransky had summoned from Germany. Speransky joined this lodge, and Professor Shiman writes that Speransky "was a Freemason who accepted the strange thought of using the organization of the lodge for the reform of the Russian clergy, which was dear to his heart. His plan consisted in founding a masonic lodge that would have branch-lodges throughout the Russian State and would accept the most capable clergy as brothers.

"Speransky openly hated Orthodoxy. With the help of Fessler he wanted to begin a war against the Orthodox Church. The Austrian chargé d'affaires Saint-Julien, wrote in a report to his government on the fall of Speransky that the higher clergy, shocked by the protection he gave to Fessler, whom he had sent for from Germany, and who had the rashness to express Deist, antichristian views, were strongly instrumental in his fall (letter of April 1, 1812). However, our 'liberators' were in raptures with Speransky's activities…." [314]

"Speransky's relations with the Martinists and *Illuminati* were reported by Count Rostopchin, who in his 'Note on the Martinists', presented in 1811 to Great Princess Catherine Pavlovna, said that 'they (the Martinists) were all more or less devoted to Speransky, who, without belonging in his heart to any sect, or perhaps any religion, was using their services to direct affairs and keep them dependent on himself.'

"Finally, in the note of Colonel Polev, found in Alexander I's study after his death, the names of Speransky, Fessler, Magnitsky, Zlobin and others were mentioned as being members of the *Illuminati* lodge…

"On March 11, 1812 Sangley was summoned to his Majesty, who informed him that Speransky 'had the boldness to describe all Napoleon's military talents and advised him to convene the State Duma and ask it to conduct the war while he absented himself'. 'Who am I then? Nothing?', continued his Majesty. 'From this I see that he is undermining the autocracy, which I am obliged to transfer whole to my heirs.'

"On March 16 Professor Parrot of Derpt university was summoned to the Winter Palace. 'The Emperor,' he wrote in a later letter to Emperor Nicholas I, 'angrily described to me the ingratitude of Speransky, whom I had never seen, expressing himself with feeling that drew tears from him. Having expounded the proof of his treachery that had been presented to him, he said to me: 'I have decided to shoot him tomorrow, and have invited you here because I wish to know your opinion on this.'" [315]

On March 17, after a two-hour confrontation with Speransky, Alexander sacked him. However, he did not carry out his decision to shoot him…

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Now let us turn to the case for the defence. First, Dominic Lieven: "Much of noble opinion saw Speransky as a 'Jacobin' and a worshipper of the heir of the Revolution, Napoleon Bonaparte. There was little truth in this. Speransky admired some of Napoleon's administrative and legal reforms, but his plans for representative institutions were closer to English models than to Napoleon's bureaucratic despotism…"[316]

Again, Alexis Trubetzkoy writes:- "So hysterical and unrelenting were the attacks on Alexander's councilor and right-hand man that Alexander soon came to feel that his own popularity was in jeopardy; public opinion of him was souring. Some of the accusations, furthermore, appeared to have enough credibility to cast doubt on Speransky's integrity and faithfulness. In early 1812 Baron Arnfelt, a close advisor to Alexander on military matters, told him: 'Guilty or not, Speransky must be sacrificed. It is indispensable to rally the nation together around the chief of state. The war we are about to engage in with Napoleon is not an ordinary war. If we are not to succumb, it is essential that we make it a national war.' The baron went on to add, 'Observe how the public attacks him; let them uncover a conspiracy; that is precisely what we need!'

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[314] Shiman, in Ivanov, op. cit., p. 255.

[315] Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 255-258.

[316] Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon,* London: Penguin, 2016, p. 66.

"In March 1812, Alexander received word from that the secretary of state had allegedly established a burgeoning network of personal secret agents, not only abroad but within the empire, who spied on the minister of foreign affairs, among others. This imprudence was too much to bear, and when the rumor spread throughout the city, Alexander determined to act firmly, if not through conviction then through expediency. The emperor summoned Speransky and confronted him with the allegations. Speransky did not deny it, but defended himself by pleading that Alexander had recently instructed him to become well informed on the activities of his diplomatic corps, 'using all necessary means'. He had further been requested to report confidentially on anything untoward. The secretary protested that in no way was he acting treacherously; the accusations, he claimed, were fabrications and pure slander.

"For two hours the exchange between tsar and minister continued, and those waiting in the anteroom heard Speransky's voice fade from a loud, clear tone to a hoarse whisper. 'I sympathize with you in your dilemma, Mikhail Mikhailovich, but you must understand my situation,' Alexander pleaded. 'The enemy is knocking at the doors of my empire. I realize that the accusations levied against you are outrageously exaggerated, but the situation in which you find yourself, placed there by the suspicions you have aroused by your behavior and the various remarks you have permitted yourself to make, what can I do? You must understand: it is essential that I do not appear weak in the eyes of my subjects by continuing to put my faith in a person under suspicion of treason… even an autocratic ruler must heed the voice of public opinion.'

"And then Alexander brought the discussion to an end. 'I am exceedingly sorry, Mikhail Mikhailovich, but I must sacrifice you for the sake of bringing our Russian people together in order to face the deadly danger before us… sovereigns cannot be judged by standards of private morality. Politics requires me to perform certain duties, unpleasant as they may be, in cold blood, even when my heart condemns it. Nevertheless, my severity, necessitated by the situation, will be tempered by generosity. You will reside in Nizhni-Novgorod, not an unpleasant town, on the banks of the Volga. Your pension will be sufficient to cover the expenses of a household worthy of a former minister, and you may take with you all your belongings, including your vast library. Farewell, my dear friend.'

"Eventually a shaken and pale Speransky emerged from the emperor's study accompanied by an equally upset Alexander – both were in tears. The emperor embraced his friend warmly and with great emotion said, 'Farewell, once again!'

"Speransky, clutching his portfolio under his trembling arm, turned and walked out of the palace. On his arrival home, General Alexander Balashov, the minister of police, one of those who for months had vilified him, greeted him. The official was there to seal Speransky's documents and to attend to his departure out of the city. Too distraught even to face his wife and children, Speransky gathered a few belongings and within an hour was on his way out of the capital, under escort to his place of exile in Nizhni-Novgorod. The all-powerful minister was no more… "[317]

Ivanov continues the story from his hostile point of view: "Speransky had too many friends and protectors. They saved him, but for his betrayal he was exiled to Nizhni Novgorod, and then – in view of the fact that the Nizhni Novgorod nobility were stirred up against him – to Perm.… At a patriotic banquet in the house of the Provincial Governor Prince Gruzinsky in Nizhni Novgorod, the nobles' patriotism almost cost Speransky his life. 'Hang him, execute him, burn Speransky on the pyre' suggested the Nizhni Novgorod nobles.

"Through the efforts of his friends, Speransky was returned from exile and continued his treachery against his kind Tsar. He took part in the organization of the uprising of the Decembrists, who after the coup appointed him first candidate for the provisional government."[318]

Perhaps the most balanced view of Speransky is Hosking's: "For a long time it was thought that Speranskii shared the cautious *Reichstaat* approach to a constitution held by his master, but the publication of his papers in the Soviet Union in 1961 showed that his drafts were a good deal more radical than his final proposals, and his published works, in which he veiled his ultimate aspirations, possibly out of deference. From these proposals it seems clear that he believed unlimited autocracy to be incompatible with the rule of law, and that he tried to bring Alexander round to this point of view. Given Alexander's equivocal personality, it is probable that at times he thought he had succeeded.

"What Speranskii proposed in the draft before the Emperor in 1809 was that the functions of government be separated into three streams, the executive, legislative and judiciary, according to advanced European and American theory, but with the Emperor heading each of them. The ministries would manage the executive, organized on functional lines. A State Council, consisting of senior statesmen appointed by the Emperor, would draft laws and present them for the Emperor's consideration. Its work would be supplemented by a State Duma, an assembly elected indirectly (through lower-level Dumas) by property-owners of town and countryside: it would not initiate legislation itself but would combine budgetary powers and the right to refer back a bill it thought to be in contradictions with the fundamental laws.

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[317] Troubtezkoy, op. cit., pp. 85-87.
[318] Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 255-258.

"This was the most ambitious blueprint for reforming Russia's governmental system until 1905. If implemented in full, it might not in theory have limited the autocrat's power, but in practice it would have ensured that power was channelled through publicly elected institutions authorized to comment, petition and protest, if not actually, to veto."[319]

"Had Speransky got his way," writes Oliver Figes, "Russia would have moved toward becoming a constitutional monarchy governed by a law-based bureaucratic state."[320]

But he didn't: the only one of Speransky's reforms that the tsar put into practice was the creation of the State Council, drawn from the aristocracy, on New Year's Day, 1810, with Speransky himself as chairman. The only other proposal of his that Alexander tried to implement – that there should be an examination for entrance into the bureaucracy – aroused such ire from the nobility that within two years the tsar was forced to exile his favourite…

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[319] Hosking, op. cit., p. 129.

[320] Figes, *Natasha's Dance,* London: Penguin, 2002, p. 84. L. A. Tikhomirov criticized it as follows: "From the beginning of the 19th century, the Petrine institutions finally collapsed. Already the practice of our 19th century has reduced 'the collegiate principle' to nothing. Under Alexander I the elegant French system of bureaucratic centralization created by Napoleon on the basis of the revolutionary ideas captivated the Russian imitative spirit. For Russians this was 'the last word' in perfection, and Speransky, an admirer of Napoleon, and, together with the Emperor, an admirer of the republic, created a new system of administration which continued essentially until Emperor Alexander II.

"Alexander I's institutions completed the absolutist construction of the government machine. Until that time, the very imperfection of the administrative institutions had not allowed them to escape control. The supreme power retained its directing and controlling character. Under Alexander I the bureaucracy was perfectly organized. A strict separation of powers was created. An independent court was created, and a special organ of legislation – the State Council. Ministries were created as the executive power, with an elegant mechanism of driving mechanisms operating throughout the country. The bureaucratic mechanism's ability to act was brought to a peak by the strictest system of centralization. But where in all these institutions was the nation and the supreme power?

"The nation was subjected to the ruling mechanism. The supreme power was placed, from an external point of view, at the intersection of all the administrative powers. In fact, it was surrounded by the highest administrative powers and was cut off by them not only from the nation, but also from the rest of the administrative mechanism. With the transformation of the Senate into the highest judicial organ, the supreme power lost in it an organ of control.

"The idea of the administrative institutions is that they should attain such perfection that the supreme power will have no need to conduct any immediate administrative activity. As an ideal this is correct. But in fact there is hidden here the source of a constant usurpation of administrative powers in relation to the supreme power. The point is that the most perfect administrative institutions act in an orderly fashion only under the watchful control of the supreme power and his constant direction. But where control and direction by the supreme power is undermined, the bureaucracy becomes the more harmful the more perfectly it is constructed. With this it acquires the tendency to become *de facto* free of the supreme power and even submits it to itself…" (*Monarkhicheskaia Gosudarstvennost'* (Monarchical Statehood), St. Petersburg, 1992, pp. 342-343).

Whatever the truth about Speransky personally, "for the rest of the nineteenth century," according to Hosking, "Russia was governed by a system which might be called 'truncated Speranskii'. The State Council and the ministries genuinely injected a new and welcome professionalism into the tasks of government, helped by the expansion of higher education and by the civil service examination; but they also remained centres of patronage, where the personal inclinations of the minister flourished unabated because there were no public institutions to restrict his powers or to comment on his exercise of them. The gap was filled, as ever since Peter, by personal agents of the Tsar, *fiskaly* or *revizory*, sent to investigate a government agency or a provincial office. Furthermore, again because there were no representative bodies to act as counterweight, the imperial court and imperial family remained decisive sources of influence, modifying the functional exercise of authority with personal and family considerations.

"When ministries were created in 1802, each of them was expected to present an annual budget estimate, but its contents were kept secret (even from the Senate) and they were confirmed by the Tsar privately till 1862. Naturally, in these circumstances, there could be nothing like a serious official audit of expenditure. The Emperor was at liberty to award extra funds to any minister or even favourite without consulting the Minister of Finance... The distinction between state funds and those of the Tsar personally was still not fully established. In 1850, when there was a 33.5 million ruble deficit, Nicholas I hid this even from the State Council, sending them a false budget with the War Ministry's estimate 38 million lower than in reality. He thus honoured in the breach the principle that a single, orderly budget ought to exist. Only from 1862 was a consolidated state budget introduced and the Ministry of Finance given complete control over all outgoings, assigning funds to each department only in accordance with its estimates. Only at that stage was a limit finally set to the financial irresponsibility of the court.

"Speranskii also had plans for financial reorganization which were aimed to stabilize the money supply, encourage private enterprise and mobilize better for the state the wealth of the empire. The greatest problem Alexander inherited was the huge quantity of *assignaty* in circulation, paper money printed to meet successive crises, especially the recent wars, and unbacked by the creation of new wealth. The inevitable result was chronic inflation. Speranskii proposed that the government should honestly declare the *assignaty* to be what they were, a form of state debt, should announce that the entire national wealth was to be collateral for them, and should promise to redeem them over a period of time by withdrawing them from circulation, and replacing them with silver coins issued by a single State Bank. Meanwhile the government should raise new revenue by selling land to state peasants, and replacing both *obrok* and poll tax by a land tax, payable by the nobility; and by selling state monopolies – for example in salt and alcohol – to private traders who would then pay tax on their profits."[321]

The debate over Speransky highlights a fundamental difference between two kinds of governance in Russian history that Hosking labels *patronage* and *bureaucracy.* The older kind, patronage, characteristically depended on the personal relationship between one man in authority and those dependent on him, whether he be a tsar ruling over his subjects or a landowner ruling over his serfs. At its best, patronage created a warm, human bond between patron and client that was flexible and infused with Christian love; its weakness was that if the patron was cruel or abusive, the client had no means to seek redress. Bureaucracy, on the other hand, provided the security of law and rule-based procedures, but was cumbersome, impersonal and prone to corruption. Europe after the French Revolution was moving decisively towards bureaucratic government, replacing patron-client relationships with state-citizen relationships and the patriotic feeling of the citizen for the nation-state and its constitution. In her efforts to remain a European great power, Russia was moving in the same direction, but slowly and with difficulty; for she had nothing to replace the major patronage bonds of tsar-subject and landowner-serf.

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Alexander's reign up to this point represents a huge paradox. On the one hand, under the influence of his atheist and republican Swiss tutor La Harpe, and the general *Zeigeist* of the times, he displayed a pronounced tendency towards liberalism and no particular love for Orthodoxy. Thus he read the New Testament for the first time only on the eve of Napoleon's invasion.[322] On the other hand, he also displayed absolutist and despotic tendencies. Thus he broke the agreement his father had signed with the Georgian people to preserve the independence of the Georgian monarchy and aristocracy and the autocephaly of the Georgian Church. And under the influence of Speransky he reformed the administration of the empire to make it even more absolutist than it had been under Peter, with each ministry ruled by one man rather than Peter's colleges, and all power converging on the sovereign as on the top of a pyramid.

The resolution of this paradox is to be found in one man: Napoleon. Bonaparte was at the same time a product of French revolutionary liberalism, a bearer of the ideals of Freedom, Equality and Fraternity, and a despot whose power over his empire was more absolute and tyrannical even than that of Louis XIV. This was no accident, but a reflection of the essence of the revolution, which is simultaneously liberal and absolutist, democratic and despotic. And Alexander, as if under Napoleon's spell, followed his spiritual master even while warring against him… But through the Providence and Mercy of God, the spell was about to be broken…

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[321] Hosking, op. cit., pp. 130-131.
[322] Nikolin, op. cit., p. 107.

21. 1812: NAPOLEON'S INVASION OF RUSSIA

By May, 1811, as a comet blazed in the heavens above Europe, Tsar Alexander was showing a much firmer, more realistic, attitude to the political and military situation. As he said to Caulaincourt: "Should the Emperor Napoleon make war on me, it is possible, even probable, that we shall be defeated. But this will not give him peace… We shall enter into no compromise agreements; we have plenty of open spaces in our rear, and we shall preserve a well-organized army… I shall not be the first to draw my sword, but I shall be the last to sheathe it… I should sooner retire to Kamchatka than yield provinces or put my signature to a treaty in my conquered capital which was no more than a truce…"[323]

"Caulaincourt was impressed: 'People believe him to be weak but they are wrong', he informed Paris. 'His amenable personality has limits and he won't go beyond them: these limits are as strong as iron.' When Caulaincourt returned to Paris, he spent five hours trying to convince Napoleon not to attack Russia. 'One good battle,' retorted Napoleon, 'will see the end of all your friend Alexander's fine resolutions.'…

"'The horizon grows darker and darker,' Alexander wrote to [his sister] Catiche on 24 December [1811]. Napoleon, 'the curse of the human race, becomes daily more abominable.' In February 1812, Napoleon told Alexander: 'I cannot disguise from myself that Your Majesty no longer has any friendship for me.'

"'Neither my feelings nor my politics have changed,' replied Alexander. 'Am I not allowed to suppose it is Your Majesty who has changed to me?' But he ended ominously: 'If war must begin, I will know how to sell my life dearly.'

"In early 1812, War Minister Barclay warned him that he must wind up the Ottoman war: Napoleon was coming. Kutuzov forced the surrender of the Ottoman army in March, then negotiated the Peace of Bucharest, in which Russia gained Bessarabia and returned Wallachia…"[324]

In spite of his many victories, Napoleon was still far achieving final victory. In fact, his position was deteriorating. Although cowed, the defeated continental powers remained stubbornly resentful; Austria in particular kept renewing the struggle. Moreover, casualties even in victory were high: "15,000 lost at Eylau and 12,000 at Friedland, 23,000 killed or surrendered at Bailen, a massive 44,000 casualties at Aspern, and another 30,000 at Wagram. Experienced troops were becoming rare, at least outside the exclusive Guards regiments; for example, of the 145,000 men of the Armée de l'Allemagne (exclusive of the Guard) in 1809,

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[323] Palmer, op. cit., p. 203.

[324] Montefiore, *The Romanovs*, pp. 298, 299. Kutuzov defeated a Turkish army four times the size of his own, showing himself a worthy successor of his mentor Suvorov.

47,000 were underage conscripts."[325] If Britain retained her will and ability to fight, Napoleon's empire could not survive indefinitely.

But Napoleon was nothing if not self-confident. He was finally defeated by his pride and by two enormous mistakes he made, elicited by the same cause: frustration at the failure of his economic war against Britain. First, he invaded Spain and Portugal, because Lisbon was the weak point in his Continental System; it was through that city that Britain continued to trade with a continent that still coveted the goods that only the English could supply them with. But the Spanish and Portuguese were conservative nations that did not succumb to the lure of French revolutionary ideals; so, with English support, they fought a cruel but effective guerrilla war against the invaders that became a running sore in Napoleon's western flank.

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The other mistake was Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia. He decided on this after a gradual cooling in relations between the two countries ending with Alexander's withdrawal, in 1810, from the economically disastrous Continental System that Napoleon had established against England. When the tsar announced that he would again allow his nation to trade with Britain, Napoleon was humiliated and insulted. (He once admitted in a letter that his inability to endure insults was a major weakness in his character.[326]) He was especially humiliated by his failure to defeat Britain, which he called, in a letter written after Waterloo to King George III, "the most powerful, most constant and most generous of my enemies".[327]

As Palmer writes, "Every possible solution for easing tension between the Russians and French broke down on two basic questions: the refusal of the French to permit Russia total control of trade by land and by sea, and the French insistence on retaining armies of occupation on Prussian territory, even as far east as the line of the Niemen."[328]

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Napoleon's invasion probably saved Russia from a union with Catholicism, which by now had made its Concordat with Napoleon and was acting, very probably, on Napoleon's orders in approaching the Russian Church. For in 1810 Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, as K.A. Papmehl writes, "became the recipient of ecumenical overtures by the French senator Grégoire (formerly Bishop of Blois), presumably on Napoleon's initiative. In a letter dated in Paris in May of that year, Grégoire referred to the discussions held in 1717, at the Sorbonne, between Peter I and some French bishops, with a view of exploring the prospects of re-unification. Peter apparently passed the matter on to the synod of Russian bishops who, in their turn, indicated that they could not commit themselves on a matter of such importance without consulting the Eastern Patriarchs. Nothing had been heard from the Russian side since then. Grégoire nevertheless assumed that the consultation must have taken place and asked for copies of the Patriarchs' written opinions. He concluded his letter by assuring Platon that he was hoping and praying for reunification of the Churches…

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[325] Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers,* London: William Collins, 1988, p. 173.

[326] Andrew Roberts, in his BBC documentary on Napoleon.

[327] Jenkins, op. cit., p. 196.

[328] Palmer, *Alexander I*, p. 213.

"Platon passed the letter to the Synod in St. Petersburg. In 1811 [it] replied to Grégoire, with Emperor Alexander's approval, to the effect that a search of Russian archives failed to reveal any of the relevant documents. The idea of a union, Platon added, was, in any case 'contrary to the mood of the Russian people' who were deeply attached to their faith and concerned with its preservation in a pure and unadulterated form."[329]

Only a few years before, at Tilsit, the Tsar had said to Napoleon: "In Russia I am both Emperor and Pope – it's much more convenient."[330] But this was not true: if Napoleon was effectively both Emperor and Pope in France, this could never be said of the tsars in Russia, damaged though the Orthodox symphony of powers had been by a century of semi-absolutism. And the restraint on Alexander's power constituted by what remained of that symphony of powers evidently led him to think again about imitating the West too closely, whether politically or ecclesiastically. That the symphony of powers was still intact was witnessed at the consecration of the Kazan cathedral in St. Petersburg on September 27, 1811, the tenth anniversary of Alexander's coronation. "There was an 'immense crowd' of worshippers and onlookers. Not for many years had the people of St. Petersburg witnessed so solemn a ceremony symbolizing the inter-dependence of Church and State, for this essential bond of Tsardom was customarily emphasized in Moscow rather than in the newer capital. To some it seemed, both at the time and later, that the act of consecration served Alexander as a moment of re-dedication and renewal, linking the pledges he had given at his crowning in Moscow with the mounting challenge from across the frontier. For the rest of the century, the Kazan Cathedral remained associated in people's minds with the high drama of its early years, so that it became in time a shrine for the heroes of the Napoleonic wars."[331]

It was from the Kazan Cathedral that Alexander set out at the start of the campaign, on April 21, 1812. As Tsaritsa Elizabeth wrote to her mother in Baden: "The Emperor left yesterday at two o'clock, to the accompaniment of cheers and blessings from an immense crowd of people who were tightly packed from the Kazan Church to the gate of the city. As these folk had not been hustled into position by the police and as the cheering was not led by planted agents, he was – quite rightly – moved deeply by such signs of affection from our splendid people!… 'For God and their Sovereign' – that was the cry! They make no distinction between them in their hearts and scarcely at all in their worship. Woe to him who profanes the one or the other. These old-world attitudes are certainly not found more intensively anywhere than at the extremes of Europe. Forgive me, dear Mamma, for regaling you with commonplaces familiar to everyone who has a true knowledge of Russia, but one is carried away when speaking of something you love; and you know my passionate devotion to this country."[332]

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[329] Papmehl, op. cit., p. 85.

[330] Debidour, *Histoire des rapports de l'église et de l'état en France* (History of Church-State Relations in France), p. 255; in M.V. Zyzykin, *Patriarkh Nikon*, Warsaw: Synodal Press, 1931, part III, p. 251. In 1805 Platon remarked to an English visitor that "the English government had done a very wicked thing in tolerating Popery" (Papmehl, op. cit., p. 82).

[331] Palmer, op. cit., p. 206.

And so Napoleon's invasion of Russia acquired a significance that the other Napoleonic wars in continental Europe did not have: it became a struggle, not simply between two countries of not-so-different political systems, but between two radically opposed *faiths*: the faith in the Revolution and the faith in Orthodoxy.[333] 1812 produced an explosion of Russian patriotism and religious feeling. God's evident support for the heroic Russian armies, at the head of which was the "Reigning" icon of the Mother of God[334], reanimated a fervent pride and belief in Holy Russia.

But not in everybody and not at the beginning of the campaign, when, as Sir Geoffrey Hosking writes, "Alexander ordered that half a battalion, 300 men, should be stationed in each guberniia, to be reinforced from the neighbouring guberniia if things got out of hand. Sure enough, soon after the invasion the excitable Count Rostopchin reported to the Committee of Ministers that an 'Old Believer sect' in Smolensk guberniia had enrolled about 1,500 serfs by promising them freedom from the landowners when Napoleon arrived. In the provinces of Lithuania and Belorussia the invasion sparked off widespread unrest: peasants, apparently under the impression that Napoleon would soon free them, refused to be called up for military service, sacked manor houses and drove out the *pomeshchiki*. In one village, as the French approached, the assembly took the decision to murder the local landowner, who was notorious for his cruelty, burn down his manor house, and divide up his property among themselves.

"In these regions, of course, most of the landowners were Polish, so that one might interpret the peasants' as patriotic. But there were some similar disorders further east: for example, in Smolensk, where in one *uezd* peasants proclaimed themselves French citizens, and a punitive detachment had to be sent to restore obedience. Overall it seems clear that the hope of emancipation was the main motive for peasant unrest, and indeed the disorders died away as it became apparent that the French Emperor was reacting just as the Russian one would have done by sending in punitive expeditions and restoring the landowners. By doing so, Napoleon converted the war into a simple issue of national survival. The feelings aroused in peasants by that fact can be summarized by a proclamation issued by a peasant partisan leader to his followers: 'You are people of the Russian faith, you are Orthodox (*pravoslavnye*) peasants! Take up arms for the faith and for your Tsar!'"[335]

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[332] Palmer, op. cit., p. 215.

[333] The Spanish also tended to see their struggle with Napoleon in religious terms.

[334] That same icon which was to reappear, miraculously renewed, on March 2, 1917, the date of the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II.

As K.N. Leontiev writes: "It was ecclesiastical feeling and obedience to the authorities (the Byzantine influence) that saved us in 1812. It is well-known that many of our peasants (not all, of course, but those who were taken unawares by the invasion) found little purely national feeling in themselves in the first minute. They robbed the landowners' estates, rebelled against the nobility, and took money from the French. The clergy, the nobility and the merchants behaved differently. But immediately they saw that the French were stealing the icons and putting horses in our churches, the people became harder and everything took a different turn…"[336]

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After a long retreat, the new Russian commander Kutuzov chose to stand and fight at the village of Borodino, ninety miles from Moscow…

"The slaughter," writes Montefiore, "was astonishingly intense, 'the bloodiest battle in the history of warfare' until the First World War: the French lost 35,000 wounded or dead [according to other sources, 40,000], the Russians 45,000 [according to others, 50,000]… Just as the battle might possibly have been won, Napoleon was asked to throw in his reserves. He refused to commit his elite Imperial Guards. As night fell, both dazed commanders believed uneasily that they had just won; Kutuzov felt sure that the battle would extend into a second day – but it was Napoleon who had failed to win a clear victory out of a lack of both imagination and boldness, two qualities which he had never lacked before.

"'The battle was the bloodiest of recent times,' Kutuzov reported to Alexander, declaring that the Russians had kept possession of the battlefield, definition of victory. 'I defeated Napoleon,' he boasted to his wife. The tsar promoted Kutuzov to marshal and awarded him 100,000 rubles. As the news of the butcher's bill came in, Kutuzov realized that his plan to fight on the next day was impossible. 'Our extraordinary losses, especially the wounding of key generals, forced me to withdraw down the Moscow road.' During the night – and contrary to his report to Alexander – Kutuzov pulled back several miles. Napoleon claimed victory: the road to Moscow was open, and he dubbed Borodino 'the battle of Moscow'. Ultimately both Napoleon and Kutuzov saw that Borodino had been a ghastly draw. 'I ought to have died at the battle of Moscow,' Napoleon later admitted in exile, but it did decide the fate of the city.

"On 1 September, Kutuzov held a war council in a peasant hut in Fili, where the old general understood that, now facing the choice of losing the army or

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[335] Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917,* London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 134.

[336] Leontiev, "Vizantizm i Slavianstvo" ("Byzantinism and Slavdom"), *Vostok, Rossia i Slavianstvo* (The East, Russia and Slavdom), Moscow, 1996, p. 104.

Moscow, he must save the army. 'Napoleon is a torrent but Moscow is the sponge that will soak him up.' Kutuzov took the decision but this was exactly the choice that Alexander had avoided by leaving the army, and it would have been impossible for a monarch to make. Kutuzov marched his army through the streets of Moscow and out the other side; he abandoned the ancient capital, without fully informing the governor-general Count Rostopchin, who ordered the evacuation of the entire population [fatefully, he also evacuated the fire-brigade]. Captured capitals from Vienna to Berlin, had usually greeted Napoleon with cowed aristocratic politeness. This was a sign that this was a new national war *à l'outrance*. In scenes of dystopic exodus, the roads teemed and seethed with the long-suffering, trudging masses, carts heaped with a lifetime's belongings, as multitudes, half a million people, the entire Muscovite population, fled the city, heading eastwards. Rostopchin opened the jails and, as the city emptied, he decided that 'If I am asked, I won't hesitate to say, "Burn the capital rather than deliver it to the enemy".' Kutuzov and his generals had already blown up ammunition stores as they left. At a secret meeting in the governor's house, Rostopchin and Prime Minister Balashov ordered the burning of further buildings, which started an unstoppable conflagration that tore through the wooden structures. Embarrassingly, Rostopchin's two city mansions were among the few buildings that did not catch fire. Afterwards, when the French approached his estate at Voronovo, a palace packed with French luxuries and Roman antiquities, Rostopchin ordered it burned, leaving a sign that read: 'Frenchmen, I abandon to you my two houses in Moscow… with their contents worth half a million rubles. Here you will find only ashes.'

"On 3 September, as Kutuzov headed south-westwards and set up a well-placed camp [near Tarutino] on the Old Kaluga road, no one greeted Napoleon at the gates of Moscow. Only a few French tutors, actresses and lethiferous hands of looters haunted the streets as Moscow burned for six days. Napoleon was spooked by what he saw. He should have withdrawn at once; his presence in Moscow broke his cardinal rule that he must conquer armies, not cities – but he had not been able to resist the storied city of golden domes. He moved into the Kremlin and waited to negotiate from within a city of ashes…"[337]

Of particular significance was the fact that it had been Moscow, the old capital associated with Orthodoxy and the Muscovite tsars, rather than the new and westernized capital of St. Petersburg, that had borne the brunt of the suffering. For it was not so much the indecisive battle of Borodino, a contest in which, according to Napoleon, "the French showed themselves worthy of victory and the Russians that they are invincible", as the burning of Moscow, one of the greatest conflagrations in history, which destroyed 80% of the dwellings in the city, and Alexander's refusal to surrender even after that, which proved the decisive turning-point, convincing Napoleon that he could not win…

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[337] Montefiore, *The Romanovs,* pp. 304-305.

For, he said, "This is a war of extermination, a terrible strategy which has no precedent in the history of civilization… To burn down their own cities! A demon has got into them! What ferocious determination! What a people! What a people!"[338]

"Napoleon's invasion and the Russian surrender of Moscow after the inconclusive Battle of Borodino… aroused Russian patriotism and stirred anti-French and anti-Polish sentiments that had been building up in Russian society since the start of the Napoleonic Wars. Russian propaganda, spearheaded by the new state secretary and head of the 'Russian party' at court, Admiral Aleksandr Shishkov reached out for symbols of patriotism and found them in the struggle against the Polish invasion during the Time of Troubles. The manifesto on Napoleon's invasion issued by Emperor Alexander I called on 'the faithful sons of Russia' and 'the Russian people, valiant descendants of valiant Slavs', to rise against the aggressor. 'In every noble, let him encounter a Pozharsky, in every religious a Palitsyn, in every citizen a Minin', wrote Shishkov, recalling the leaders of the resistance to the Polish invasion back in 1612. With Napoleon taking Moscow- the first presence of foreign troops in the capital since the Time of Troubles two hundred years earlier – parallels between the Polish capture of Moscow in 1612 and Napoleon's in 1812 became inescapable."[339]

Nevertheless, the Russians' decision to burn down Moscow was highly controversial. It has been argued that Rastopchin had the nobility evacuated from the city with their families because he was well aware of their pro-Napoleonic, potentially seditious sentiments. Thus according to the Martinist Runich, "Rastopchin, acting through fear, threw the nobility, the merchants and the non-gentry intellectuals out of Moscow in order that they should not give in to the enticements and influence of Napoleon's tactics… He saved Russia from the yoke of Napoleon."[340]

On the other hand, it was a savage decision. "For three days, one observer had noted, 'the whole city was on fire, thick sheaves of flame of various colours rose up on all sides to the heavens, blotting out the horizon, sending in all directions a blinding light and a burning heat'. In the chaos, French soldiers had looted everything they could lay their hands on, joined in the pillaging by peasants who descended upon the city from the neighbouring countryside. After the fires had died down, the charred ruins of the burnt-out city had offered little in the way of food and shelter to sustain Napoleon's army though the winter. Nearly 7,000 out of just over 9,000 houses, more than 8,000 shops and warehouses, and over a third of the city's 329 churches had been totally destroyed. Some 270 million roubles' worth of private property had been lost without any possibility of compensation. Many civilians had already fled, and most of the rest had subsequently left the city, facing a life of vagabondage and destitution. Only 2 per cent of the population had remained, and a large proportion of those, including many soldiers, did not survive…"[341]

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[338] Napoleon, in Hosking, op. cit., p. 133.
[339] Plokhy, *Lost Kingdom*, London: Allen Lane, 2017, p. 75.
[340] Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 264-265.

"Many soldiers" is an understatement. Alexander Solzhenitsyn writes that as a result of the fire of Moscow 15,000 Russian soldiers who were recovering from wounds suffered at Borodino in the military hospitals of the city were burned alive.[342] Lieven corrects this: "Of the more than 30,000 wounded soldiers who had been in Moscow, all but 6,000 were evacuated in time, thanks above all to the efforts of James Wylie, the efficient head of the army' medical services."[343] This was total war, unprecedented in its scope, breadth and cruelty...

Napoleon got no joy from his occupation of Moscow, much as he admired the place; in fact, as Plokhy points out, "the surrender of Moscow to the French army turned out to be the beginning of the end of Napoleon's empire. He had expected Russia's surrender and negotiations, but there was nothing of the kind."[344] The Tsar refused to negotiate, keeping to his promise of waging war until the last French soldier had left the country. And by lingering in Moscow, as if mesmerized by the flames around him, Napoleon lost his best chance of victory.

"The fire of Moscow," writes Ivanov, "started the people's war. Napoleon's situation deteriorated from day to day. His army was demoralised. The hungry French soldiers wandered round the outskirts of Moscow searching for bread and provisions. Lootings and murders began. Discipline in the army declined sharply. Napoleon was faced with a threatening dilemma: either peace, or destruction."[345]

God clearly helped the Orthodox. Thus early in the campaign terrible rain storms killed thousands of horses that were desperately needed by Napoleon (he lost 200,000 in the whole campaign). Then terrible summer heat killed many soldiers. The late onset of winter tempted Napoleon to stay too long in Moscow. But then, when the winter did come, it was savage…[346]

The terrible sufferings of the French on their return march are well-known. There was even cannibalism, - a sure sign of apocalyptic times, - as the soldiers of the Great Army began to put their fellow-soldiers in the stew pots. Out of the vast army - nearly 600,000 men, only about half of whom were French - that set out for Russia, only 120,000 returned, 35,000 of them French.[347] The Russians lost 400,000, but they had saved their homeland. Orthodoxy had triumphed…

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[341] Richard J. Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914,* London: Penguin, 2017, pp. 3-4.

[342] Solzhenitsyn, *Le 'problème russe' à la fin du xxe siècle* (The 'Russian Problem' at the End of the 20th Century), Paris: Fayard, 1994, pp. 52-53). See also Evgeny Ponasenkov, "Dokumental'noe Rassledovanie o Sozzhenii Moskvy v 1812 godu (Documentary Investigation of the Burning of Moscow in 1812), http://millionaire.ru/history.

[343] Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon,* London: Penguin, 2016, p. 212.

[344] Plokhy, op. cit., p. 75.

[345] Ivanov, op. cit., p. 269.

[346] For details, see Adam Zamoyski's superb account, *1812: Napoleon's Fatal March on Moscow,* London: HarperCollins, 2004.

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The role of the commander-in-chief Kutuzov was and remained controversial. His decision not to engage Napoleon in a full-scale battle during his retreat from Moscow was bitterly criticized by many of his generals. Tsar Alexander was also bitterly disappointed.[348] V.F. Ivanov considers that he refrained from attacking the French more vigorously at the battle of Tarutino because of his Masonic links with the French commander Murat.[349]

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[347] According to Blanning, "Of the 655,000 troops that had crossed the Vistula only 93,000 remained. Some 370,000 had died as a result of enemy action or disease, or had simply frozen to death; around 200,000, including 48 generals and 3,000 other officers, had been taken prisoner" (op. cit., p. 664).

[348] The Tsar blamed Kutuzov, probably unjustly, for the defeat at Austerlitz, and was against his appointment in 1812, declaring: "The public wanted his appointment. I appointed him: as regards myself personally, I wash my hands of him."

[349] "On September 23 at Tarutino camp Kutuzov met Napoleon's truce-envoy Lauriston. Kutuzov willingly accepted this suggestion and decided to keep the meeting a complete secret. He told Lauriston to meet him outside the camp, beyond the line of our advance posts, on the road to Moscow. Everything was to be done in private and the project for a truce was to be put forward very quickly. This plan for a secret agreement between Napoleon and the Masonic commander-in-chief fell through. Some Russian generals and especially the English agent attached to the Russian army, [General] Wilson, protested against the unofficial secret negotiations with Napoleon. On September 23 Wilson made a scene in front of Kutuzov; he came to him as the representative of the general staff and army generals and declared that the army would refuse to obey him. Wilson was supported by the Duke of Wurtemburg, the Emperor's uncle, his son-in-law the Duke of Oldenburg and Prince Volkonsky, general-adjutant, who had arrived not long before with a report from Petersburg. Kutuzov gave way, and the meeting with Lauriston took place in the camp headquarters.

"Kutuzov's failure in securing peace did not stop him from giving fraternal help to Napoleon in the future.

"After insistent urgings from those close to him and at the insistence of his Majesty, Kutuzov agreed to attack near Tarutino.

"The battle of Tarutino [on October 6] revealed the open betrayal of the commander-in-chief.

"'When in the end the third and fourth corps came out of the wood and the cavalry of the main army was drawn up for the attack, the French began a general retreat. When the French retreat was already an accomplished fact and the French columns were already beyond Chernishina, Bennigsen moved his armies forward.

"The main forces at the moment of the French retreat had been drawn up for battle. In spite of this, and the persuasions of Yermolov and Miloradovich, Kutuzov decisively refused to move the armies forward, and only a part of the light cavalry was set aside for pursuing the enemy, the rest of the army returned to the Tarutino camp.

"Bennigsen was so enraged by the actions of the field-marshal that after the battle he did not even consider it necessary to display military etiquette in front of him and, on receiving his congratulations on the victory, did not even get off his horse.

"In private conversations he accused Kutuzov not only of not supporting him with the main army for personal reasons, but also of deliberately holding back Osterman's corps.

"For many this story will seem monstrous; but from the Masonic point of view it was necessary: the Mason Kutuzov was only carrying out his obligations in relation to his brother (Murat), who had been beaten and fallen into misfortune.

However, the Masonic hypothesis is not necessary. The fact is: Kutuzov's policy worked; it was he, after all, who masterminded Napoleon's expulsion from Russia with the destruction of almost the whole of his army. Even without confronting Napoleon in any major battles, by the end of 1812 the Russian army was sufficiently worn down and depleted by wounds, cold, hunger and inadequate medical provision as to make Kutuzov's caution not only justified by inescapable.

"The last thing he wanted," writes Lieven, "was to wreck the core of the Russian army in the life and death struggle that the French Guards would undoubtedly wage to save their emperor and themselves."[350] The protégé of Suvorov, who also brought the war against Turkey to an end just before Napoleon's invasion, surely deserves credit for his preservation of the army for the vital campaigns of 1813-14. True, Kutuzov was a Mason: according to Sokolskaia, who is quoted by Ivanov, he was initiated into Masonry at the "Three Keys" lodge in Regensburg, and was later received into lodges in Frankfurt, Berlin, Petersburg and Moscow, penetrating into the secrets of the higher degrees.[351] But in the view of many in this, the golden age of Masonry, membership of the lodge was not incompatible with Orthodoxy, patriotism and the pride of the professional soldier. Thus in spite of his Masonry, Kutuzov was at least nominally a pious believer who frequently invoked God and went to all Sunday and feastday services…[352]

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Montefiore continues the story after Tarutino: "After the closely-fought battle of Maloyaroslavets on October 11-12, Napoleon sent a peace offer to Alexander. 'Peace?' replied Alexander. 'But as yet we've not made war. My campaign is only just beginning.' He was frustrated by Kutuzov's slow pursuit. On 3-6 November, Kutuzov bruised the passing French at Krasnyi in a rolling skirmish in which he took over 20,000 prisoners and killed a further 10,000. 'Yet another victory,' Kutuzov told his wife, but he was keen to avoid more battles. 'I'm by no means sure,' said Kutuzov, 'the total destruction of Napoleon would be of such benefit.'

"In pursuing the retreating army of Napoleon Kutuzov did not have enough strength or decisiveness to finish once and for all with the disordered French army. During the retreat Kutuzov clearly displayed criminal slowness.

"'The behaviour of the field-marshal drives me mad,' wrote the English agent General Wilson about this."

For "the Masonic oath was always held to be higher than the military oath." (Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 269-270,272)

[350] Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon,* p. 267.

[351] « In 1779 he was initiated into the German Masonic lodge 'Three Keys' (Ratisbon). He was a member of the Moscow lodges 'Sphinx' and 'Three Banners.' He also participated in the meetings of the Masonic lodges of St. Petersburg, Frankfurt, Berlin. He had a higher degree of initiation in the Swedish system. Within the Freemasons he was known as 'evergreen laurel'" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mikhail_Kutuzov)

[352] Lieven, *Russia Against Napoleon,* p. 235.

"His forces were down to fewer than 60,000 men and he let the other armies, under the German-born general, Prince Peter Sayn-Wittgenstein from the north and Admiral Chichagov from the south, take over the pursuit. Kutuzov had let Napoleon escape. 'It is with extreme sadness that I realize that the hope of wiping away the dishonor of Moscow's loss by cutting off the enemy's retreat has been lost,' wrote Alexander, thanks to Kutuzov's 'inexplicable inactivity'. Kutuzov offered to resign. When he occupied Smolensk, Alexander bit his lip and awarded him a resounding new title: prince of Smolensk.

"As two Russian armies converged on him, Napoleon and the remnants of his army, harried by Cossacks and facing total destruction, raced to cross the Berezina River. In a feat of French engineering, luck, courage and Russian incompetence, Napoleon crossed the Berezina and then, abandoning his men to Russian winter and revenge, he raced for Paris. 'It seems the All-Powerful has brought on the head of this monster all the miseries he intended for us,' Alexander wrote with grim satisfaction to both Arakcheev and Catiche as Napoleon's retreat turned to rout in the first week of November…

"Kutuzov had no intention of pursuing Napoleon into Europe, in which he was supported by the dowager empress and Catiche. Russia had lost 150,000 men; the army was down to 100,000. But Alexander had a different vision of a personal and national mission, one that was now decisive in European history. He left Nikolai Saltykov, that relic of the reigns of Elizaveta and Catherine, in Petersburg, and advanced into Europe to destroy Napoleon. 'You have saved not just Russia,' he told his soldiers, 'but all of Europe'…"[353]

"Alexander returned to Vilna determined to resume the role of Europe's liberator which he had sought to play prematurely seven years previously [at Austerlitz]. He was now a Tsar with a sense of mission. Even Rumiantsev, appeaser though he was by nature, caught the new spirit: 'Heaven has chosen you to accomplish its designs', he wrote to his master from St. Petersburg, 'revealing already your destiny, that you shall save Europe.' But Kutuzov was cautious. He did not for one moment doubt continuation of the war would lead to the final downfall of Napoleon, but only if the Russians were strong in men and material. According to General Wilson, who was attached to Kutuzov's headquarters throughout the pursuit of Napoleon, the army suffered 45,000 casualties in the final four weeks before entering Vilna, and modern Soviet historians reckoned that only a third of Kutuzov's men were fit for active military service at the close of the year. Kutuzov therefore wished to wait until the thousands of recruits marshaling in Russia had reached headquarters. He was not opposed to Alexander's mission, although he was naturally less interested in the general affairs of Europe than the non-Russians who had entered the Tsar's service; but he was convinced the army should not cross the frontier into Prussia in the depth of winter.

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[353] Montefiore, op. cit., pp. 307-309.

"Alexander, however, had no intention of listening to Kutuzov. He was encouraged by the Prussian exile Stein who had already written urging him 'to deliver the human race from the most absurd and degrading of tyrannies', and he genuinely believed the Russians should strike while the enemy was still in confusion. There was good sense in this argument, for the Cossacks and the militia units were better able to give battle under winter conditions than in the spring, when climate and terrain would favour troops from western and southern Europe. The Germans at Alexander's headquarters, both soldiers and civilians, argued that their compatriots were eager to change sides against the French provided they could count on adequate Russian protection from counter-measures. However, although Kutuzov was exhausted and anxious to rest both himself and his troops, Wittgenstein was still pursuing the enemy columns along the banks of the lower Niemen and had every intention of crossing into Prussia as soon as possible. Alexander warmly approved of Wittgenstein's initiative, as indeed he had done throughout the campaign: here at last was a General after his own heart. 'Thanks Heavens everything here is going well,' Alexander wrote to Saltykov once he had assessed the situation at Vilna. 'It is proving a little difficult to dispose of the Prince Marshal [Kutuzov], but it is absolutely essential to do so.'

"Events played admirably into Alexander's hands. On 30 December General Hans von Yorck, commanding the Prussian contingent in what remained of the Grand Army, concluded a military convention at Tauroggen (Taurage) with the Russian General Diebitsch, a corps commander serving under Wittgenstein. The actual terms of the convention were limited and precise: the Prussians would police the salient of territory around the mouth of the Niemen, southwards from Memel, and would offer no opposition to the Russian army; but the significance of this pledge of neutrality influenced events over a far larger area; for it made it virtually impossible for the French to retain any hold on East Prussia and they rapidly evacuated the city of Kōnigsberg, though preparing to withstand a siege in Danzig rather than surrender so vital a port.

"Alexander heard of the Tauroggen convention when one of Wittgenstein's aides arrived in Vilna on 4 January. Immediately the Tsar decided to exploit the signs of weakness in the French hold on Germany. He sent the ardent Prussian patriot General von Boyen on a secret mission to King Frederick William with the offer of an offensive and defensive alliance, and he also encouraged Stein to issue and appeal to the King which urged him to break with Napoleon and call on his subjects to liberate themselves in partnership with the advancing Russians. Finally on 9 January Alexander left Vilna and prepared to carry the war into Europe. He established temporary headquarters down the Niemen at Meritz and it was from there that, three days later, he ordered his army westwards across the Niemen and into Prussia. By the Russian calendar it was the first day of the New Year; and a proclamation from Kutuzov called on

Alexander's troops 'to liberate from oppression and misery even those nations who have taken up arms against Russia'."[354]

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[354] Palmer, *Alexander I,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974, pp. 258-259.

22. TSAR ALEXANDER IN PARIS

The Tsar, writes Palmer, was "in a state bordering on religious ecstasy. More and more he turned to the eleventh chapter of the Book of Daniel with the apocalyptic vision of how the all-conquering King of the South is cast down by the King of the North. It seemed to him as if the prophecies, which had sustained him during the dark days of autumn and early winter, were now to be fulfilled: Easter this year would come with a new spiritual significance of hope for all Europe. 'Placing myself firmly in the hands of God I submit blindly to His will,' he informed his friend Golitsyn from Radzonow, on the Wrkra. 'My faith is sincere and warm with passion. Every day it grows firmer and I experience joys I had never known before... It is difficult to express in words the benefits I gain from reading the Scriptures, which previously I knew only superficially... All my glory I dedicate to the advancement of the reign of the Lord Jesus Christ'... At Kalisch (Kalisz) on the border of the Grand-Duchy of Warsaw and Prussia the Tsar concluded a convention with Frederick William [on February 28, 1813]: the agreement provided for a close military alliance between Russia and Prussia, stipulating the size of their respective contingents and promising Prussia territory as extensive as in 1806; but the final clauses went beyond the normal language of diplomacy to echo Alexander's religious inspiration. 'Let all Germany join us in our mission of liberation,' the Kalisch Treaty said. 'The hour has come for obligations to be observed with that religious faith, that sacred inviolability which holds together the power and permanence of nations.'"[355]

"The Austrians," writes Blanning, "were more hesitant, for Metternich had no desire to see French hegemony replaced by a Russian version. It was only when it became clear that Wellington had achieved total victory in Spain, followed by the revelation of Napoleon's total intransigence in an interview with Metternich at Dresden in June, that Austria moved from a cautious neutrality to belligerence. By the Treaty of Teplitz of 9 September 1813, the three great continental powers pledged to provide armies of 150,000 each and not to make peace until Napoleon was defeated."[356]

The Tsar's plan to go further west into Germany and liberate the whole of Western Europe was opposed by Kutuzov, most of the senior officers, Minister of the Interior Admiral Shishkov and Archimandrite Filaret. "The consensus was that Russia should help herself to East Prussia and much of Poland, providing herself with some territorial gain and a defensible western border, and leave it at that. But Alexander ignored them."[357] However, in hindsight we must conclude that Alexander was right and his critics wrong in wanting to press forward across the Vistula and into Germany. For Napoleon's power was by no means broken in 1813; and if Alexander's troops had not taken part in the great battle that did finally break it, at Leipzig in October, 1813, it is likely that the ogre would have retaken the whole of Germany and Poland up to the Vistula.[358]

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[355] Palmer, op. cit., pp. 260-261.

[356] Blanning, op. cit., p. 665.

[357] Adam Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace: The Fall of Napoleon & the Congress of Vienna*, London: Harper Perennial, 2008, p. 27.

Even on the eve of the invasion of France in January, 1814, as the Russians, Austrians and Prussians assembled on the banks of the Rhine, Alexander was almost alone in realizing that no truce with Napoleon was fitting – he would only break it some months later – and that he had to be completely defeated and overthrown. Although Alexander was a consummate diplomat in holding the alliance together, in relation to the Antichrist Napoleon he realized that, not diplomacy, but only brute force would prevail. (The British prince regent and prime minister were the only foreign leaders who agreed with him.) Moreover, as Lieven writes, he understood that "in peacetime it would not be possible to sustain for long the level of military expenditure which security against Napoleon would require. For that reason too it made good sense to try to end the Napoleonic threat now, while he was weakened, while Russia's resources were mobilized, and while there was a strong chance of drawing Austria and Prussia into the struggle."[359]

After further battles in France, Alexander arrived in Paris on March 31, 1814. As he declared: "The armies of the allied powers have occupied the capital of France. The allied sovereigns respect the wishes of the French nation. They declare that if conditions of peace are to have the strongest guarantees the ambitions of Bonaparte must be curbed… they respect the integrity of France as she was under the legitimate kings… they invite the senate to form a provisional government… and prepare a constitution that will be agreeable to the French people." Thus on the one hand, he refused to make any compromises, or meet with Napoleon until he abdicated (which he did twelve days later), allowing the Bourbons to return to power and leaving France before the first meeting of the provisional government's parliament. And on the other hand, he did his best to reconcile the French people with the loss of their evil empire.

"The hour called for elaborate exercises in charm and in tact. No other contemporary public figure could display these qualities to such advantage."[360] Alexander was indeed the man of the hour, chosen by God to carry out a task of national reconciliation nobody else could have carried out.

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[358] According to Clark, Leipzig was "the single greatest military engagement to that date in the history of continental Europe, and probably of human warfare. The battle of Leipzig has justly been called the 'Battle of the Peoples' (*Volkerschlaft*), for the 500,000 men who took part included Frenchmen, Germans (on both sides), Russians, Poles, Swedes, nearly every one of the subject nationalities of the Austrian Empire and even a specialist British rocket brigade that had been formed only in the previous year and was to see its first action at Leipzig" (op. cit., p. 367).

[359] Lieven, *Russia and Napoleon,* p. 289.

[360] Palmer, op. cit., p. 287.

For "After the atrocities committed in Moscow," writes Protoceacon Germain Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, "Parisians had reason to be concerned for their city and in general the vengeance of the Russians. On the eve of the entrance of the Russian forces, an Accord of Capitulations of the French capital was signed with the eighth paragraph stating 'The French capital is given over to the magnanimity of the allied Emperors,' and of course, the goodwill of the Russian Emperor, who had every reason to harbor ill will to his enemies. In fact, Alexander not only forbade his soldiers and officers from plundering the city, but ordered to 'rid Paris of all indignities and give the keys of the city to some foreign museum.'…

"Friendly relations soon flourished between the victors and the vanquished, especially after our soldiers, the 'wild Asians' forcefully prevented all attempts by the Austrians to rob the local populace. A historian of the time, Marie-Pierre Rey, who published an excellent book in that year, *Un Tsar à Paris* (A Tsar in Paris), wrote, 'Alexander I showed himself to be very generous and kind to France and Paris especially. If we took with him any art items (paintings, sculptures…), he either bought them or he received them as gifts.'

"Compared to the Prussians and Austrians who showed themselves to be vandals and plunderers of paintings from the Louvre, the Russians aroused much more sympathy from the Parisians. The Russian occupation of Paris became an example of the true nobility of our people and army, especially in contrast with the wild barbarism of Napoleon's rapists and pillagers in the Russian cities. One French officer gave witness to the Russians' well-mannered behavior in a conversation with a future Decembrist, Ryleev, 'I speak with you as friends, because your soldiers and officers behave themselves as our friends. Your Alexander is our defender and benefactor, while his allies are real leeches.'

"Marie Pierre-Rey writes with good reason that such behavior on the part of invaders who have reached the capital of their defeated enemy is 'a unique instance in history'… Excited shouts rang out in Paris, 'Welcome Alexander! Welcome Russia!' It went so far that even such exclamations were heard, 'Alexander, stay with us and you will be our king!' But no, Alexander I preferred to restore the monarchy of the Bourbons by summoning the brother, Louis XVIII, of the executed King Louis XVI to assume the throne of his forefathers. Thereafter Alexander I, the first of the monarch victors, departed Paris on July 2, 1814, having completed the last ceremonial inspection of his troops in the French capital. He leaves France not just on any day, but on the eve of the first meeting of the new parliament, to avoid constraining Louis XVIII and avoid the impression that he is his administrator and is meddling in the interior affairs of France…

"The abdication ceremony for Napoleon was set for the time of Passion Week, which the Russian Emperor considered a sign from on high for his holy mission. Pascha was celebrated that year on March 29 / April 10 and the Bright Resurrection of Christ in 1814 was certainly one of the most unusual and grand in the life of Alexander I, intended to erase the atheism of the French revolutionaries with the Holy Orthodoxy of the Russians."[361]

A platform was constructed on the Place de la Concorde, where Louis XVI had been executed. Seven priests officiated and 80,000 soldiers surrounded the platform. "The majestic church service began. The thousands of God-loving soldiers thundered in one voice, 'Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!'...

"As for Emperor Alexander I, he anxiously recalled his own personal worries in a letter to his friend Prince Golitsyn, 'In my heart, it was a moment of celebration, moving and frightening. Here, I said to myself, is where you, led by the incomprehensible will of Providence your Orthodox warriors to turn your prayers to the Lord in the capital of the enemy, who only a while ago attacked Russia. On the same spot where the King was the victim of the people's fury. The sons of the North went along the last steps of the King of France. The Russian Tsar together with his people conducted an Orthodox service and in that way the bloody square was cleansed.'

"'After the liturgy concluded,' the Tsar noted further, 'our spiritual triumph completely reached its goal. It was even comical to watch the French marshals and the many phalanxes of French generals gathered near the cross, pushing and shoving to be the first at the cross. The fascination was everywhere and the French were dumbfounded by the spiritual grandeur of the Russians.' A real celebration of Orthodoxy! A celebration of Orthodox Russia! What an example, what a lesson of Christian behavior in a foreign country!

"The Russians left not only a lesson in religion, but also in morality. A lesson on how a victorious army should behave with a vanquished nation and a vanquished country. The behavior of the occupying forces set an example. The slightest breach in discipline was stopped, even petty theft was punished. For all of the time that Paris was occupied, only one case is known when a woman was accosted, for which the offender paid with his life. The Russians did not even leave any debts in France, the company commander of the Russian occupying forces, M.S. Vorontsov, paid all the debts of the Russian officers in France from his personal funds, which amounted to a million and a half rubles, for which the French authorities thanked him officially! This was just two years after these 'civilised' Europeans robbed stores, storage facilities, homes and churches and killed innocent citizens, abused women and turned holy churches into stables.

"Let no one think that we are presenting here an idealized, biased view of events. Our words are confirmed by historical facts and official witness of many Frenchmen of authority. When in June 1814, the Russians transferred military control over Paris to the French national guard, Baron Osten-Saken relinquished his rank of governor-general. In that instance, the city government presented him with a gift, among other, of a gold sword as a sign of appreciation and gratitude. The sword was covered in diamonds and on one side bore the inscription 'Peace 1814' and on the other side 'The city of Paris to General Saken'. It was because he 'brought peace and safety to Paris, freed it of extra outlays, protected public places and the courts, and as a result of his care, the citizens were able to tend to their usual needs and did not feel they were in a martial state, but rather enjoyed all the benefits and guarantees of peace time.'"[362]

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[361] Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, "Two Hundredth Anniversary of Victory over Napoleon – Russians in Paris", in Peter Koltypin (ed.), *Imperial Russia – Aid to the United States and the World,* Stratford, CT: Birch Tree Publishing, 2019, pp. 81-84.

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Alexander's historic role in 1812-14 is the clearest refutation of Tolstoy's famous thesis in *War and Peace* about the unimportance of individual human actors in history. Almost alone, writes Lieven, he "well understood the strengths and weaknesses of his enemy, and used this insight to full effect. Before the invasion he realized exactly what kind of war Napoleon wanted and needed. The Russians planned and executed the opposite kind of war – a drawn-out defensive campaign and a 'people's war' which would play to their strengths and Napoleon's weaknesses. In the first year of the war Russian strategy succeeded beyond their expectations. Napoleon's entire army was virtually destroyed…

"In 1813 Alexander had to take the great risk of invading central Europe with his exhausted and weakened army to mobilize his potential allies, at times almost needing to grab them by the scruff of the neck in order to get them to serve their own and Europe's interests. The courage, skill and intelligence he showed in first creating the allied coalition and then leading it to Paris was remarkable…"[363]

Indeed, for God acts in history primarily, not through huge impersonal forces, but through men made in His image. The impersonal forces exist, but God manipulates them in order to support, check or frustrate the plans of personal actors. In 1812-14 God used both nature (the weather) and intangible psychological forces such as nationalism and the love of glory and honour; but above all he used the free will of such men as Alexander and Napoleon to accomplish the chastising and salvation of Holy Russia…

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[362] Ivanov-Trinadtsaty, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

[363] Lieven, *Russia against Napoleon,* pp. 326, 327-328.

23. THE CONGRESS OF VIENNA

In only one thing did the ever-chivalrous Alexander err in 1814: as we have seen, he and the Prussians and Austrians gave Napoleon the island of Elba, very close to the mainland, from which he escaped in 1815, only to be finally defeated with great difficulty and loss of life at the Battle of Waterloo in June. However, at the Congress of Europe's leaders at Vienna, which began before Elba and was resumed with greater urgency after Waterloo, the Tsar must take the main credit for finally seeing to the restoration of legitimate monarchism in France and throughout Europe. For the idea that dominated immediately after the final defeat of Napoleon was *reaction and the restoration of monarchism*. It could not be otherwise when three most powerful states in Europe were all monarchies… Of course, reaction was not a popular idea, and, as we shall see, had serious flaws; but it did guarantee a century with no major wars in Europe until 1914.

However, as Evans points out, "Putting the genie of revolutionary change back into the bottle of history was not easy. For the destructiveness of the wars fought by Napoleon and his predecessors since the early 1790s was not merely physical. Napoleon had redrawn the map of Europe several times, annexing large swathes of it to France, from the Hanseatic cities in the north through the Low Countries to north-west Italy in the south, creating a French Empire that at its height covered 290,000 square miles and counted 44 million people as its inhabitants [compared with 30 million inhabitants of the Russian Empire]. He had surrounded this with a ring of satellite states, often ruled by his relatives, including the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, the Kingdom of Italy and the Kingdom of Westphalia. The Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, created by Charlemagne in 800, had come to an inglorious end in 1806 [when Emperor Francis II abdicated]. Many of these changes would have been reversed in 1815, but Napoleon showed that borders were not immutable. There were other changes, too. The power of the Church had been reduced, with vast swathes of land secularized and ecclesiastical states swept off the map. The registration of births, marriages and deaths had been assigned to secular authorities. Monasteries had been dissolved, and the power of the Church had been further reduced in many areas by the introduction of freedom of religion, civil marriage and divorce, secular education and the state appointment of clergy. The Church had also been pressured into introducing freedom of worship and a measure of equal rights for non-Christians, notably Jews.

"Everywhere that Napoleon ruled he had replaced encrusted custom and privilege with rationality and uniformity. While the emperor's armies rampaged across Europe, his bureaucrats had moved in silently behind, reorganizing, systematizing, standardizing. In the areas that France annexed and the borderlands where it established its client states, notably western Germany, northern Italy and the Low Countries, a new generation of professional administrators had emerged to run things while Napoleon was away waging his never-ending military campaigns. Local and regional jurisdictions, such as those exercised by hundreds of imperial knights in the Holy Roman Empire, and by

Church and seigneurial courts, had been supplanted by a system of centralized uniformity administered by a judicial bureaucracy. In all those areas, the Napoleonic Law Code had disposed of existing, often tradition-bound laws and ordinances, introducing a key element of equality before the law, even if in some respects this central principle of the French Revolution had been modified by Napoleon's more conservative outlook on issues such as the rights and duties of women. Property rights were guaranteed wherever the Code applied, as they had not been in many areas before. The Code adhered to many of the key ideas of the French Revolution, including the freedom of the individual, and, as Napoleon himself proclaimed in his testament, equality of opportunity, 'career open to talent', and 'the rule of reason'. Weights and measures had been at least to some extent standardized, internal customs tolls abolished, guilds and other restrictions on the free movement of labour swept away, serfs freed (including in Poland). Everywhere Napoleon had brought change, and as he departed for his final exile on St. Helena in 1815, it was clear that much of it could not be reversed…"[364]

But some things could and had to be reversed. And that was the job of the representatives of the victorious powers who met at a reconvened Congress of Vienna after the shock-interlude of Napoleon's Hundred Days.

As Davies writes, they met in chastened mood and "could not be accused, as in the previous year, of 'dancing instead of making progress'. They were ready to risk nothing. They were determined, above all, to restore the rights of monarchy – the sacred institution considered most threatened by the Revolution. In so doing they paid little attention to the claims either of democracy or of nationality….

"The spirit of the settlement, therefore, was more than conservative: it actually put the clock back. It was designed to prevent change in a world where the forces of change had only been contained by a whisker. The Duke of Wellington's famous comment on Waterloo was: 'a damned nice thing, the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life'. Such was the feeling all over Europe. The issue between change and no change was so close that the victors felt terrified of the least concession. Even limited, gradual reform was viewed with suspicion. 'Beginning reform,' wrote the Duke in 1830, 'is beginning revolution.' What is more, France, the eternal source of revolutionary disturbances, had not been tamed. Paris was to erupt repeatedly – in 1830, 1848, 1851, 1870. 'When Paris sneezes,' commented the Austrian Chancellor, Metternich, 'Europe catches cold.' French-style democracy was a menace threatening monarchy, Church, and property – the pillars of everything he stood for. It was, he said, 'the disease which must be cured, the volcano which must be extinguished, the gangrene which must be burned out with a hot iron, the hydra with jaws open to swallow up the social order'.

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[364] Evans, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

"In its extreme form, as embodied by Metternich, the reactionary spirit of 1815 was opposed to any sort of change which did not obtain prior approval. It found expression in the first instance in the Quadruple Alliance of Russia, Prussia, Austria, and Britain, who agreed to organize future congresses whenever need arose, and then in a wider 'Holy Alliance' organized by the Tsar. The former produced the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (1818), which [at the Tsar's request] readmitted France to the concert of respectable nations. The latter produced the proposal that the powers should guarantee existing frontiers and governments in perpetuity."[365]

The Tsar's aim was much higher than a political restoration: it was the restoration of *Christianity* as the guiding principle of European politics. Henry Kissinger writes: "He was convinced, as he wrote to a confidante in 1812, that triumph over Napoleon would usher in a new and harmonious world based on religious principles, and he pledged: 'It is to the cause of hastening the true reign of Jesus Christ that I devote all my earthly glory.' Conceiving of himself as an instrument of divine will, the Czar arrived in Vienna in 1814 with a design for a new world order in some ways even more radical than Napoleon's in its universality: a 'Holy Alliance' of princes sublimating their national interests into a common search for peace and justice, forswearing the balance of power for Christian principles of brotherhood. As Alexander told Chateaubriand, the French royalist intellectual and diplomat, 'There no longer exists an English policy, a French, Russian, Prussian or Austrian policy; there is now only one common policy, which, for the welfare of all, ought to be adopted in common by all states and all peoples.' It was a forerunner of the American Wilsonian conception of the nature of world order, albeit on behalf of principles dramatically the opposite of the Wilsonian vision…"[366]

Perhaps the best measure of the Tsar's victory was the Orthodox Divine Liturgy celebrated on his namesday, September 12, 1815, on seven altars on the Plaine de Vertus, eighty miles east of Paris, in the presence of all the leading political and military leaders of the allied nations and a huge Russian army of 160,000 troops. Neither before nor since in the modern history of Europe has there been such a public, universal witness, by all the leaders of the Great Powers, to the true King of kings and Lord of lords and His true religion, Orthodox Christianity. And if this was just a diplomatic concession on the part of the non-Orthodox powers, it was much more than that for Alexander. His Orthodox spirit, so puzzling to the other leaders of Europe, was manifested in a letter he wrote that same evening: "This day has been the most beautiful in all my life. My heart was filled with love for my enemies. In tears at the foot of the Cross, I prayed with fervour that France might be saved…"[367] A few days later Alexander presented his fellow sovereigns with the draft of a treaty designed to bind them in a union of faith and virtue, requiring them "to take as their sole guide the precepts of the Christian religion" and insisting that the treaty be dedicated "to the Holy and Indivisible Trinity" in Paris - because it was the most irreligious of all Europe's capital cities.

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[365] Davies, *Europe*, London: Pimlico, 1997, pp. 762-763.

[366] Kissinger, *World Order*, London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 58-59.

[367] Palmer, *Alexander I*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1974, p. 333.

Only the King of Prussia welcomed the idea. The Emperor of Austria was embarrassed, and in private agreed with his chancellor, Metternich, that Alexander was mad. On the British side, the Duke of Wellington confessed that he could hardly keep a straight face; he and the British Foreign Minister Lord Castlereagh mocked it in private.[368]

Stella Ghervas writes that the tsar "wrote the preliminary notes in pencil and then gave them to his Head of Chancery, Count John Capodistrias, so that he could render them in a diplomatic language. In his turn, Capodistrias passed the document to a brilliant and cultivated secretary [a Phanariot Greek] named Alexandre Stourdza. Stourdza later provided a detailed explanation of the text of the treaty in an unpublished piece called *Considérations sur l'acte d'alliance fraternelle et chrétienne du 14/26 septembre 1815…*

"In his *Considérations*, Stourdza sought to demonstrate that the pact was grounded on a solid theoretical and ideological base, in order to overcome the suspicions of those who opposed the pact and to refute their objections. In his theoretical construction, Napoleon was the heir of French Revolution, and his fall the end of an epoch of social and political disorder. Referring to the recent victory of the Allies following the Hundred Days, Stourdza wrote, 'the principle of subversion against all religious and social institutions has just been slain a second time.' This European unrest found its origin, according to him, in the Seven Years' War (1763) and included the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the succeeding Napoleonic epoch. Hence the sole solution was to restore a principle of order in public life, and therefore to 'proclaim […] the sole conservative principles, which had been too long relegated to the subordinate sphere of domestic life.' There lies the explanation for the intentional but otherwise incomprehensible [!] intrusion of Christian principles into the political sphere. In fact the Tsar had already expressed that very idea nine months earlier, on December 31, 1814, in a diplomatic note that he had sent to the plenipotentiaries of the three great powers… More generally, the feeling from many contemporaries that they had just escaped a near-apocalyptic experience largely explains the wave of mysticism that washed over Europe in those years.

"Stourdza's testimony thus confirms that the Holy Alliance did pursue a conservative, religious, and counter-revolutionary agenda. …"[369]

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[368] Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace: The Fall of Napoleon & the Congress of Vienna*, London: Harper Perennial, 2008, pp. 520-522.

[369] Ghervas, "Antidotes to Empire: From the Congress System to the European Union", in John W. Boyer and Berthold Molden (eds.), *Eutropes: The Paradox of European Empire*, Paris and Chicago, 2014, pp. 58-59.

The more cynical attitude of the western statesmen was not unexpected. After all, religion - or, at any rate, the Christian religion - had long ceased to be seen as the basis of political life in the West. True, the monarchs protected religion as a foundation of their own monarchical power; but in the post-1815 settlement the Catholic Church received few of its lands back, which showed their true attitude to it. The fact was that Tsar Alexander was now the most powerful man in Europe, and the others could not afford to reject his religio-political project out of hand.

So, led by Metternich[370], they set about discreetly editing the treaty of its more mystical elements until it was signed by the monarchs of Russia, Austria and Prussia (the British and the Turks opted out) on September 26. Thus the original draft read: "Conformably to the word of the Holy Scriptures, the three contracting Monarchs will remain united by the bonds of a true and indissoluble fraternity, and considering each other as fellow countrymen, they will on all occasions, and in all places led each other aid and assistance; and regarding themselves towards their subjects and armies as fathers of families, they will lead them, in the same fraternity with which they are animated to protect religion, peace and justice." [371]

But Metternich modified the first part to remove the phrase "by the bonds of a true fraternity" to read: "The three monarchs will remain united".

Again, the original draft stated that the three Powers were three provinces of a single Christian nation. But Metternich changed this to present them as three branches of the same family.

"Metternich," continues Ghervas, "having obviously grasped that there was an attempt to pass political reformism under the guise of religious rhetoric (both of which he disliked), had therefore been quick to temper the enthusiasm of the Tsar. His was also the paternalist idea that the monarchs were 'benevolent fathers.' However, the idea that Europe represented a 'Christian nation' still made it into the final version of the text.

"It is obvious from the original proposition that Alexander I had sought to found a European nation 'essentially one' and living in peace, of which the various states would be provinces. We can easily guess the reason for Metternich's amendments: the original wording would have united the peoples of Europe in a position, so to speak, "over the heads of the sovereigns." The text would have smacked of a constitution.

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[370] "Discreetly, Metternich set about changing the form of the 'Holy Alliance', ridding the draft [treaty] of those phrases which implied penitence for past imperfections; contrition smacked too strongly of revolutionary presumption to satisfy those who identified the truths of religion with orderly and conservative government. Their only doubt was whether the Tsar would accept major modifications in a document which he seemed to treat as a new dispensation of Holy Writ." (Palmer, op. cit., p. 334)

[371] Palmer, op. cit., pp. 333-334.

The original version even provided that the military forces of the respective powers would have to be considered as forming a single army—130 years before the aborted project of the European Defense Community of the early 1950s! Even though Tsar Alexander I had initially envisaged a sort of league of nations united under the authority of the sovereigns, what eventually emerged was an alliance of kings.

"From this point of view, the pact of the Holy Alliance stemmed from a line of thought of the Enlightenment. We should keep in mind that the monarchs and ministers of the post-Napoleonic era considered themselves as heirs of that movement as a matter of course: after all, they were the direct descendants of the sovereigns Frederick II of Prussia, Catherine of Russia, and Joseph II of Austria, all of whom had surprised their epoch with their intellectual audacity and rivaled one another to host in their courts philosophers such as Voltaire, Rousseau, Diderot, and Kant, much to the chagrin of the conservative minds of their respective kingdoms. On the other hand, the three sovereign signatories of the Holy Alliance rejected the French Revolution with the utmost energy…"[372]

"To advancing his concept inside Russia, [the Tsar] ordered copies of the Alliance's founding document to be displayed on walls and in churches. He reorganized the Holy Synod to take under its wing not only the Orthodox Church, but also the other Christian denominations, and he amalgamated it with the Ministry of Education under his close friend, Prince Aleksandr Golitsyn, to create a new super-ministry, of 'Spiritual Affairs and Popular Enlightenment', or what the religious historian Georgii Florovsky has called 'the ministry of religious-utopian propaganda'. The intention was to create a synthesis of the Christian faiths, and kind of 'inner' or 'universal' Christianity as a basis for reconciling the numerous peoples of the empire, and with them the peoples of Europe as well. This over-arching faith was to be preached in all the schools and universities. It was a vast extension of the religious ideals of his father…"[373]

Alexander's own supporters joined in the spirit of his "sacred idea". Thus Golitsyn wrote in positively chiliastic terms: "This act cannot be recognized as anything other than a preparation for that promised kingdom of the Lord which will be upon the earth as in the heavens."[374] And Archimandrite Philaret, the future Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, wrote: "Finally the kingdoms of this world have begun to belong to our Lord and His Christ".[375]

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[372] Ghervas, op. cit., p. 60.

[373] Sir Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia. People and Empire 1552-1917,* London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 139.

[374] Golitsyn, quoted by Fr. Georges Florovsky, "Philaret, mitropolit Moskovskij" ("Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow"), in *Vera i Kul'tura* (Faith and Culture), St. Petersburg, 2002, p. 265.

[375] Philaret, quoted in Metropolitan Ioann (Snychev), *Zhizn' i deiatel'nost' mitropolita Filareta* (The Life and Activity of Metropolitan Philaret), Tula, 1994, p. 121.

Philaret appears to have been influenced by the ecumenism of his sovereign at this time. For in 1815 he wrote in his *Conversations between one testing and one convinced of the Orthodoxy of the Greco-Russian Church*: "Insofar as the one [the Eastern Church] and the other [the Western

24. THE CONGRESS SYSTEM

The great monarchical powers pledged themselves not to take major decisions on the international stage without consulting each other. Their alliance was therefore a kind of United Nations Assembly. But thanks to the Tsar - albeit modified by Metternich, - it was a consciously *Christian* United Nations.

Strikingly, however, it was a Christian United Nations that did not include the Pope… This was a second blow to the Pope's political power after the insult he received from Napoleon… As Ghervas writes, "the concept of a 'Christian nation' in Europe, an ecumenism embracing the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox faiths was, in fact, an insidious attack aimed at the Holy See. Somewhat surprisingly, it has not been noted that the Pope of Rome, a major political actor of European history for centuries, was now being banned from the continental chess game of the Congress of Vienna and would never recover his former status.

"In fact, the statement in the treaty of the Holy Alliance that 'the three sovereigns make up a single nation with the same Christian faith' amounted to a notice of liquidation of the thousand-year-old political system of Western Europe, which had been founded (at least ideologically) on the alliance between the Catholic Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. By putting Catholicism, Protestantism, and Orthodoxy on equal footing, thus making the political organization of Christian Europe 'non-confessional,' the sovereigns of the three powers were plainly declaring that the Pope's claim to supremacy in Europe was null and void. From that angle, it takes the aspect of a backstage revolution. Napoleon had already damaged the prestige of the Sovereign Pontiff with his own sacrilegious coronation in 1804. Two years later, the abolition of the Holy Roman Empire had sealed the bankruptcy of the temporal side of the fellowship between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. In 1815, it was the turn of the spiritual side to be liquidated. As a result, the political role of the Sovereign Pontiff was reduced to that of a sovereign of an Italian state. This ideological backlash profoundly upset Pope Pius VII; therein lies the reason why the Holy See refused to sign the pact of the Holy Alliance.

"Why had the sovereigns of the great powers engaged in such a radically anti-clerical maneuver that deliberately ousted the Pope from European

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Church] confess Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh, in this respect they have a common Spirit, which 'is of God'… Know that, holding to the above-quoted words of Holy Scripture, I do not dare to call any Church which believes 'that Jesus is the Christ' false" (Snychev, op. cit., pp. 402, 408). However, in defense of the holy metropolitan, it should be pointed out that in the above-quoted work he rejected the heresies of papism, and that he never served with heterodox hierarchs or sought union with the heterodox churches. And he revered his mentor, Metropolitan Platon of Moscow, who during his journey to Kiev and other Russian cities in 1804 reproached "the Russian authorities for following 'that new-fangled mode of thinking which is called tolerance' in their relations with the Jesuits, and blamed the Jews for the impoverishment of the Christian population in the areas in which they are numerous" (Papmehl, *Metropolitan Platon of Moscow*, p. 81).

politics?… From Alexander's point of view, a Patriarch of Rome who not only considered himself independent of the sovereigns, but historically claimed to be their suzerain, was a contestant on the European political scene that had to be remorselessly shoved out of the way.

"That rather unfriendly attitude toward the Catholic Church was shared, but for entirely different reasons, by the Protestant king of Prussia (a hereditary enemy of Roman supremacy) and the sovereign of Austria—the same who had liquidated the Holy Roman Empire and crowned himself emperor of Austria under the name of Francis I. The latter was also the nephew of the archduke Joseph II (1741–90), who had applied a policy known as Josephism, aimed precisely at subordinating the Church to the State and at restraining pontifical power. Hence, beyond the mysticism of the epoch, would it be appropriate to speak of a strand of mystification in the Holy Alliance, especially when considering the amendments from a character as down-to-earth as Metternich? In any case, there was a shared interest on the part of the three Powers to put the final nail in the coffin of Papal political authority.

"In firm opposition to the Holy Alliance, there arose, naturally enough, representatives of Roman Catholic thought, such as the Jesuits, as well as Louis de Bonald and Joseph de Maistre. In defiance of all odds, they kept advocating an alliance of sovereigns under the auspices of the Pope, as well as a return to the prerogatives of the aristocratic class. It is those views that most impressed minds in France, especially the alliance of the Bourbon monarchy and the Church of Rome, despite the fact that both were now only secondary pieces on a rather complicated European chessboard. In addition, Maistre knew the Tsar well, since he had spent several years in Saint Petersburg; if he mistrusted him, it was not for failing to know him. Maistre wrote about the Holy Alliance, even before its publication: 'Let us note that the spirit behind it is not Catholic, nor Greek or Protestant; it is a peculiar spirit that I have been studying for thirty years, but to describe it here would be too long; it is enough to say that it is as good for the separated Churches as it is bad for Catholics. It is expected to melt and combine all metals; after which, the statue will be cast away.' Maistre was exposing what he had rightly perceived as a cunning maneuver: by adopting the Christian religion as the guiding principle, but diluting it at the same time into a vague whole, the three sovereigns had meant to undermine the Pope's sphere of influence. By a process that our age would call 'embrace, extend, and extinguish,' they had deliberately opened the door to a European political sphere that would henceforth be free of ecclesiastical influence (though not of religion).

"Finally, the wording Christian family' offered yet another advantage in the geopolitical context of the time: it covered all states of Europe, but left out the Ottoman Empire, a Muslim state. Russia, which had concluded a war with Turkey only three years before, had been entertaining definite ambitions over it since the epoch of Peter the Great. Thus the Holy Alliance potentially gave the Russian Empire a free hand on the rather complex Eastern Question—in other words, the competition among the great powers to partition the territory of the declining Ottoman Empire."[376]

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Although the Congress system presupposed five great powers, whose consultations and joint actions controlled the geopolitical situation, there was only one truly global power – Britain. The global dominance acquired through the Royal Navy enabled Britain to take a more relaxed attitude to the threat of revolution than the other great powers. As Henry Kissinger explains: "To protect the new overall territorial settlement, the Quadruple Alliance of Britain, Prussia, Austria, and Russia was formed. A territorial guarantee – which was what the Quadruple Alliance amounted to – did not have the same significance for each of the signatories. The level of urgency with which threats were perceived varied significantly. Britain, protected by its command of the seas, felt confident in withholding definite commitments to contingencies and preferred waiting until a major threat from Europe took specific shape. The continental countries had a narrower margin of safety, assessing that their survival might be at stake from actions far less dramatic than those causing Britain to take alarm.

"This was particularly the case in the face of revolution – that is, when the threat involved the issue of legitimacy. The conservative states sought to build bulwarks against a new wave of revolution; they aimed to include mechanisms for the preservation of legitimate order – by which they meant monarchical rule. The Czar's proposed Holy Alliance provided a mechanism for protecting the domestic status quo throughout Europe. His partners saw in the Holy Alliance – subtly redesigned – a way to curb Russian exuberance. The right of intervention was limited because, as the eventual terms stipulated, it could be exercised only in concert; in this manner, Austria and Prussia retained a veto over the more exalted schemes of the Czar.

"Three tiers of institutions buttressed the Vienna system: the Quadruple Alliance to defeat challenges to the territorial order; the Holy Alliance to overcome threats to domestic institutions; and a concert of powers institutionalized through periodic diplomatic conferences of the heads of government of the alliances to define their common purposes or to deal with emerging crises. This concert mechanism functioned like a precursor of the United Nations Security Council. Its conferences acted on a series of crises, attempting to distill a common course: the revolutions in Naples in 1820 and in Spain in 1820-23 (quelled by the Holy Alliance and France, respectively) and the Greek revolution and war of independence of 1821-32 (ultimately supported by Britain, France, and Russia). The Concert of Powers did not guarantee a unanimity of outlook, yet in each case a potentially explosive crises was resolved without a major-power war."[377]

"In 1814-15, the European great powers formed what can justly be called a system of international relations rooted in some conception of common norms, interests, and restraint. They could do this in part because all had suffered from a generation of warfare and dreaded its recurrence. The continental powers were also united by what might be described as an antidemocratic peace theory. With some justice – particularly as regards France – they believed that revolution would bring to power regimes bent on external aggression and certain to further destabilize the Continent. Britain never fully subscribed to this theory nor to the European concert, partly out of liberal principles and partly because of its traditional wish to keep the continental powers divided."[378]

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[376] Ghervas, op. cit., pp. 64-67.

[377] Kissinger, op. cit., pp. 64-65.

Led by Foreign Secretary Lord Castlereagh, the British pursued a balance-of-power politics with Britain playing the part of "balancer". "By 1820," writes Fraser, "the Congresses were issuing claims that they had the right to put down revolutions in foreign countries as well as clamping down on the press and on liberal policies in the German universities. As a result Britain no longer attended in an official capacity, sending observers to Congress meetings rather than ambassadors. Britain, said Castlereagh, whose own king was the product of a revolution, could not logically 'deny to other countries the same right of changing their government' by similar revolutions. Thus by the 1820s Britain was once more the friend of constitutional change abroad…"[379]

That is why at the Congresses of Troppau (1820), Laibach (1821), and Verona (1822), the British were lukewarm about intervention to crush revolutions in Naples, Greece, and Spain. Castlereagh's balance of power politics was not appreciated at home, and the strain of that led him to commit suicide in 1822. But his policy survived him. Thus, as Norman Davies writes, "on the critical issue of the revolt of Spain's South American colonies, the British Foreign Secretary, George Canning, joined the US President, James Monroe, in forbidding any sort of European intervention in the Americas. 'I called the New World into existence,' he told the House of Commons in 1826, 'to redress the Balance of the Old.' In effect, he killed the Congress System stone dead. 'Things are getting back to a wholesome state,' he remarked shortly before his death. 'Every nation for itself, and God for us all'."[380]

As Ferguson writes, "Although Britain's 'continental commitment' was intermittent over the coming century, it was sufficient – until 1914 – to prevent any one power on the Continent from challenging, as France under Napoleon, the fundamental legitimacy of the pentarchical order. In essence, European stability was based on a balance between the four continental powers, which Britain preserved by occasional diplomatic or military intervention."[381]

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[378] Dominic Lieven, *Towards the Flame. Empire, War and the End of Tsarist Russia,* London: Allen Lane, 2015, p. 26.

[379] Fraser, *A People's History of Britain,* London: Macmillan, 2007, p. 509.

[380] Davies, *Europe: A History*, London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 763.

[381] Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower,* p. 131.

25. THE MONARCHICAL PRINCIPLE

The most important achievement of the Holy Alliance was the re-establishment of the monarchical principle, and in particular of *Christian hereditary* monarchism, which excluded both despotisms created by revolution and the papal monarchy…

Now we have seen that even Napoleon's regime had acquired monarchical trappings. But he had failed to make it truly hereditary. Thus when an obscure general called Malet had announced Napoleon's death in Russia in October, 1812, the Emperor had been startled by how close the mutiny came to success. What touched a particularly raw nerve in him, writes Zamoyski, "was that the news of his death in Russia, announced by Malet, had led those who believed it to consider a change of regime, instead of making them proclaim the succession of his son, the King of Rome. 'Our forefathers rallied to the cry: "*The King is dead, long live the King!*" he reminded them, adding that 'These few words encompass the principal advantages of monarchy.' That they had not been uttered on the night of 23 October revealed to him that for all its trappings, the monarchy he had created lacked consistency, and he was still just a general who had seized power, a *parvenu* with no title to rule beyond his ability to hold on to it. He felt this setback personally, and the sense of insecurity it induced would have a profound effect on how he behaved over the next two years, making him more aggressive and less amenable, and leading inexorably to his downfall…"[382]

A hereditary monarch may not be an admirable person, and may suffer many defeats in the field; but he is the king, and in a society that still believes in kingship, this gives his regime solidity and strength. And if he fails or dies, his son will succeed him, and command the same reverence and loyalty. But once Napoleon had been defeated, and the magical aura of invincibility surrounding him began to fade, it was the end both for him and for his upstart dynasty – as he himself recognized after Waterloo.

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However, while the Congress of Vienna succeeded in re-establishing the *principle* of hereditary monarchism as the only true principle of political legitimacy, the kings did not always recover their full, pre-revolutionary powers. Thus while the French King Louis XVIII's powers were declared to rest on a divine mandate, a bicameral legislature on the English model was established, and in 1821 the rights of citizens to freedom of religion and thought were reaffirmed. Nor did the great powers restore the map of Europe to what it had been before 1792. They increased their own power, of course. But many hundreds of smaller rulers, especially in Germany, were partially or wholly dispossessed in the complex negotiations and horse-trading that took place between them in Vienna and Paris.

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[382] Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace,* p. 5.

"The territorial settlements created a new Europe. A Dutch-Belgian composite state, the United Kingdom of the Netherlands, appeared in the north-west. Norway was transferred from Denmark to Sweden. Austria struck deep inroads into Italy with the acquisition of Lombardy-Venetia and the installation of Habsburg dynasts on the thrones of Tuscany, Modena and Parma. The borders of the Russian Empire, redrawn to encompass the bulk of eastern and central Poland, extended further westwards than at any time in European history.

"In Prussia, too, this was a new beginning...", acquiring "the northern half of the Kingdom of Saxony, the Swedish-ruled rump of western Pomerania and a vast tract of Rhenish and Westphalian territory reaching from Hanover in the east to the Netherlands and France in the west."

"The Hohenzollern kingdom was now a colossus that stretched across the north of Germany, broken only by one gap, forty kilometres wide at its narrowest point, where the territories of Hanover, Brunswick and Hesse-Cassel separated the Prussian 'Province of Saxony' [about two-fifths of Saxony] from the Prussian 'Province of Westphalia'. The consequences for Prussia's (and Germany's) nineteenth-century political and economic development were momentous."[383]

This still left a new German Confederation encompassing thirty-eight (later thirty-nine) independent states, who had a Federal Diet based in Frankfurt.Millions of ordinary people, especially in Germany and Italy, now found themselves under new rulers. This created almost as much disruption and discontent as had the Napoleonic invasions. Thus the donation of a large part of the Catholic Rhineland to Protestant Prussia with its very different social and cultural traditions created a kind of nostalgia for the Napoleonic times in some. In others, in whom the War of Independence of 1813 had stirred up a specifically German (as opposed to Prussian or other small-state) nationalism, it created the desire for a further consolidation and unification of the German states. The question was: under whose aegis – the traditional suzerain, Austria, or the new one, Prussia?

In spite of these flaws in this new system of international relations, "there was no denying that something new had been established – and no denying that it worked. In the century between the treaties of Utrecht and the Congress of Vienna, there had been thirty-three European wars involving some or all of the eleven acknowledged powers of the period (which included Spain, Sweden, Denmark, Holland and Saxony). For the 1815-1914 period, there were seventeen such wars, even if Spain and Sweden are still counted as powers. The probability of war participation by any power declined by roughly a third. There were, in effect, world wars in the eighteenth century as in the twentieth – the Seven

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[383] Clark, op. cit., pp. 388,389.

Years' War was a truly global conflict – but there was no world war in the nineteenth century…"[384]

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However, the potential for another world war remained. For in spite of the defeat of the French revolution, and of the opposition of all the hereditary rules of Europe, the idea of *nationalism* that the revolution had spawned continued to grow in influence. This was the idea that not only the rulers, but also the nations over which they ruled, had rights and privileges, and that a nation represented an organic and even moral unity that could not be simply cut up and parceled out as, for example, Poland had been. Grass-root "counter-nationalisms" such as the German kind that arose in 1813 had been instrumental in overcoming French nationalism and despotism, and the kings had been able to "ride the tiger" of these grass-root nationalisms to everyone's advantage. But it had not been easy. And the time would come when the question: who would prevail in the nation-state, the king or the people? - would have to be answered.

William Doyle writes: "An exuberant, uncompromising nationalism lay behind France's revolutionary expansion in the 1790s: but what the French found, after this first impact of a nation in arms on its neighbours, was that the neighbours responded in kind. They found that the doctrine of the sovereignty of the nation, proclaimed by them at the outset of the Revolution in 1789, could be turned against them by other peoples claiming their own national sovereignty. In states long united by custom and language, such as the Dutch Republic, all the French example did was to reinforce patriotic sentiments already strong. In areas never before united, like Italy, it created a powerful national sentiment for the first time by showing that archaic barriers and divisions could be swept away. The first Italian nationalists placed their hopes in French power to secure their ends, but from the start their attitude was double-edged. 'Italy,' declared the winning entry for an essay competition on the best form of Italian government, sponsored by the new French regime in Milan in 1796, 'has almost always been the patrimony of foreigners who, under the pretext of protecting us, have consistently violated our rights, and, while giving us flags and fine-sounding names, have made themselves masters of our estate. France, Germany and Spain have held lordship over us in turn… it is therefore best to provide… the sort of government capable of opposing the maximum of resistance to invasion.' The tragedy for nationalistic Italian Jacobins was that, when popular revulsion against the French invaders swept the peninsula in 1798 and 1799, they found themselves identified with the hated foreigners. Elsewhere, peoples and intellectual nationalists found themselves more at one; and not the least of the reasons why France's most inveterate enemies were able to resist her successfully was the strength of volunteering. An Austrian call for volunteers against the French produced 150,000 men in 1809. Three years later the Russians were able to supplement their normal armed forces with over 420,000 more or less willing recruits to drive out the alien invader. Only nationalism could successfully fight nationalism: and when it did, as Clausewitz… saw, it would be a fight to the death."[385]

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[384] Ferguson, *The Square and the Tower,* p. 132.

The settlement of 1815, and the congresses that took place in the decade that followed, have been much criticized for not taking sufficient account of these new developments, and of vainly trying to resist an unstoppable development by crude police methods and repression. An eloquent exponent of this point of view is Adam Zamoyski, who writes: "The Vienna settlement imposed an orthodoxy which not only denied political existence to many nations; it enshrined a particularly stultified form of monarchical government; institutionalised social hierarchies as rigid as any that had existed under the *ancient regime*; and preserved archaic disabilities – serfdom was not abolished in Russia until half a century after the congress. By excluding whole classes and nations from a share in its benefits, this system nurtured envy and resentment, which flourished into socialism and aggressive nationalism. And when, after the 'Concert of Europe' had fought itself to extinction in the Great War, those forces were at last unleashed, they visited on Europe events more horrific than the worst fears Metternich or any of his colleagues could have entertained.

"It would be idle to propose that the arrangements made in 1815 caused the terrible cataclysms of the twentieth century. But anyone who attempted to argue that what happened in Russia after 1917, in Italy and Germany in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s, and in many other parts of central and southern Europe at various other moments of the last century had no connection with them would be exposing themselves to ridicule… "[386]

And yet, as Zamoyski admits, the peacemakers of 1815 "did face a formidable task, one that defied any ideal solution. Just because certain arrangements they made turned out to have evil consequences, it does not follow that the opposite course would have yielded more benign results."[387] Indeed; for the opposite course of giving in to the propaganda of the French revolution might well have brought the cataclysm of 1914-45 forward by several decades. The kernel of truth in Zamoyski's argument is that the great powers did not cure the disease of Europe, but only arrested or repressed it by crude counter-revolutionary measures that were often counter-productive. But the only real cure for the disease was for the peoples of Europe to accept the old faith of Europe faith from its only remaining champion and their liberator, Russia – a near-impossible task, since the attitude of the Europeans to Russia was one of supercilious condescension and non-comprehension, if not outright hatred, while Russia herself would soon (from the Decembrist Rebellion of 1825) begin struggling to suppress the same revolutionary disease within herself.

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[385] Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 417.
[386] Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace,* p. 569.
[387] Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace,* p. 566.

In this context, the attempt of Tsar Alexander to save Europe by preaching the faith to his fellow monarchs – even if that faith was seen through the liberal-ecumenist prism of an Enlightenment education - acquires an extra poignancy. He failed because his fellow monarchs and their peoples were not interested in the faith. But his failure was less his than that of Europe as a whole; for the only hope for a real resurrection of Christian and monarchical Europe lay in accepting the lead of Russia in both the spiritual and the political spheres…

In the final analysis, the defeat of Napoleon and the re-establishment of a generally peaceful monarchical order proved the viability of traditional kingship in the face of the most powerful and determined attempt to overthrow it yet seen in European history. Supporters of Napoleon sometimes argue that while his rule was tyrannical, it was, unlike the tsarist autocracy, at least based on the libertarian principles of the French revolution. But the difference between the Napoleonic and Tsarist autocracies is huge and not in favour of the former. The revolutionary despotism of Napoleon enslaved peoples and drowned Europe in rivers of blood. The Tsarist autocracy, whatever its faults, liberated the peoples and restored peace. And it established an order at the Vienna Congress that, in spite of many upheavals and changes, remained essentially in place until 1914, when the anti-monarchical movement of revolutionary socialism, another product of the French revolution, finally destroyed the old order, bringing in the Ages of Atheism, Communism and Fascism. That the old order survived for as long as it did, giving Europe its most peaceful century, was owing to no small degree to that former-freethinker-turned-Orthodox-monarchist, Tsar Alexander the Blessed…

III. THE WEST: INDUSTRIALISM, NATIONALISM AND ROMANTICISM

26. THE ROTHSCHILD CENTURY

The long nineteenth century achieved, among many other things, the destruction of feudalism in the economic and social relations between men, and its replacement by *industrialism* and *capitalism*.

Now capitalism, as Adam Smith taught, is based on *egoism* in theory and practice. It is a paradoxical theory, to say the least: that the public interest is best served by everyone pursuing his self-interest as freely as possible! But it found confirmation in the work of the London banker David Ricardo in the 1820s. "It was Ricardian economic theory," writes Norman Cantor, "that became and remains the theoretical foundation of that market capitalism in which so many nineteenth-century Jews made their fortune and general fame, or at least found the means for a satisfying private family life. Ricardo was the Moses of Jewish capitalism, who brought down the tables of truth to show to the chosen people and the admiring Gentiles as well.

"The main point of Ricardian economics is identical with that of Reform Judaism's Haskalah-Kantian theology. Just as God in the latter is a creator whose majesty is humanly unapproachable, so the market is a universal, rationalizing structure that cannot be modified by human will or sentiment, such as by paying wages beyond the minimum with which the market can operate, or by state interference with the business cycle or capital accumulation. Leave God and the market alone and attend to your personal, family, and communal lives and business interests…"[388]

There is nothing mystical about the Jews' acquisition of enormous wealth. In the present as in the past – for example, in the Hungarian Jew George Soros' vastly successful gamble on Britain leaving the European Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1990, or in the Jewish bank Goldman Sachs' ability to profit even from the drastic culling of the American financial institutions in 2007 – we see the same prosaic formula for success, consisting of the following: (i) The exceptionally close solidarity of the members of the tribe to each other on the basis of their common Jewish faith or – which comes to the same thing – Jewish nationality; (ii) their vast capital base, which enables them to ride out storms and disasters that would sink less well capitalized organizations; and (iii) their vast intelligence network combined with great speed and security of communication, which enables them always to be "ahead of the game" in what may be called "institutionalized insider dealing." All three elements were important in the rise of the most famous Jewish family of the modern world, *the Rothschilds*…

The Rothschilds came to prominence during the last years of the Napoleonic wars.

Between 1793 and 1816, as David Cannadine writes, the British national debt

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[388] Cantor, *The Sacred Chain*, London: Fontana, 1996, p. 266.

"quadrupled, reaching the unprecedented level of £900 million by the time hostilities finally ended. This was approximately three times the gross national income, the interest payments alone taking up a quarter of all government expenditure, and there were widespread fears that the risk of national bankruptcy was even greater than it had been in 1797." However, "the revenues that accrued by both indirect and direct taxes kept going up: customs and excise receipts increased over threefold from £13.5 million to £44.8 million in 1815, while the yield from the new income and property taxes rose almost tenfold from £1.67 million in 1799 to £14.6 million in the final year of the war. This enabled successive governments to maintain Britain's domestic and international creditworthiness, which meant they were able to raise much larger loans than Napoleon was willing to contemplate or able to obtain. During the final critical years of the war, the British government was borrowing more than £25 million annually, and the increases in revenue enabled it both to service this growing debt and to pay for the costs of the war. One banker who was especially well placed to take advantage of these opportunities was the Jewish financier Nathan Rothschild, who had arrived in Britain from Frankfurt in 1804. Thanks to his four brothers, his commercial connections were unrivalled, and he raised money to finance the British war effort in Germany and Holland – and even in France itself – much of which was directly conveyed to Portugal for the use of Arthur Wellesley and his army. This was, Rothschild claimed, 'the best business I ever did'. By 1814 he had loaned nearly £1.2 million to the British government and established himself as one of Europe's leading bankers; indeed, he was revealingly described as the 'Napoleon of finance'."[389]

As Niall Ferguson writes: "'Master of unbounded wealth, he [Rothschild] boasts that he is the arbiter of peace and war, and that the credit of nations depends upon his nod; his correspondents are innumerable; his couriers outrun those of sovereign princes, and absolute sovereigns; ministers of state are in his pay. Paramount in the cabinets of continental Europe, he aspires to the domination of our own.'

"Those words were spoken in 1828 by the Radical MP Thomas Dunscombe. The man he was referring to was Nathan Myer Rothschild, founder of the London branch of what was, for most of the nineteenth century, the biggest bank in the world. It was the bond market that made the Rothschild family rich – rich enough to build forty-one stately homes all over Europe…

"… His brothers called Nathan 'the general in chief'. 'All you ever write,' complained Salomon wearily in 1815, 'is pay this, pay that, send this, send that.' It was this phenomenal drive, allied to innate financial genius, that propelled Nathan from the obscurity of the Frankfurt *Judengasse* to mastery of the London bond market. Once again, however, the opportunity for financial innovations was provided by war.

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[389] Cannadine, *Victorious Century. The United Kingdom, 1800-1906*, London: Viking, 2017, pp. 84-85.

"On the morning of 18 June 1815, 67,000 British, Dutch and German troops under the Duke of Wellington's command looked out across the fields of Waterloo, nor far from Brussels, towards an almost equal number of French troops commanded by the French Emperor, Napoleon Bonaparte. The Battle of Waterloo was the culmination of more than two decades of intermittent conflict between Britain and France. But it was more than a battle between two armies. It was also a contest between rival financial systems: one, the French, which under Napoleon had come to be based on plunder (the taxation of the conquered); the other, the British, based on debt.

"Never had so many bonds been issued to finance a military conflict. Between 1793 and 1815 the British national debt increased by a factor of three, to £745 million, more than double the annual output of the UK economy. But this increase in the supply of bonds had weighed heavily on the London market. Since February 1792, the price of a typical £100 3 per cent consol had fallen from £96 to below £60 on the eve of Waterloo, at one time (in 1797) sinking below £50…

"According to a long-standing legend, the Rothschild family owed the first millions of their fortune to Nathan's successful speculation about the effect of the outcome of the battle on the price of British bonds. In some versions of the story, Nathan witnessed the battle himself, risked a Channel storm to reach London ahead of the official news of Wellington's victory and, by buying bonds ahead of a huge surge in prices, pocketed between £20 and £135 million. It was a legend the Nazis later did their best to embroider. In 1940 Joseph Goebbels approved the release of *Die Rothschilds*, which depicts an oleaginous Nathan bribing a French general to ensure the Duke of Wellington's victory, and then deliberately misreporting the outcome in London in order to precipitate panic selling of British bonds, which he then snaps up at bargain-basement prices. Yet the reality was altogether different. Far from making money from Wellington's victory, the Rothschilds were very nearly ruined by it. Their fortune was made not because of Waterloo, but despite it.

"After a series of miscued interventions, British troops had been fighting against Napoleon on the Continent since August 1808, when the future Duke of Wellington, then Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Wellesley, led an expeditionary force to Portugal, invaded by the French the previous year. For the better part of the next six years, there would be a recurrent need to get men and *materiel* to the Iberian Peninsula. Selling bonds to the public had certainly raised plenty of cash for the British government, but banknotes were of little use on distant battlefields. To provision the troops and pay Britain's allies against France, Wellington needed a currency that was universally acceptable. The challenge was to transform the money raised on the bond market into gold coins, and to get them to where they were needed. Sending gold guineas from London to Lisbon was expensive and hazardous in time of war. But when the Portuguese merchants declined to accept the bills of exchange that Wellington proferred, there seemed little alternative but to ship cash.

"The son of a moderately successful Frankfurt antique dealer and bill broker, Nathan Rothschild had arrived in England only in 1799 and had spent most of the next ten years in the newly industrializing North of England, purchasing textiles and shipping them back to Germany. He did not go into the banking business in London until 1811. Why, then, did the British government turn to him in its hour of financial need? The answer is that Nathan had acquired valuable experience as a smuggler of gold to the Continent, in breach of the blockade that Napoleon had imposed on trade between England and Europe. (Admittedly, it was a breach the French authorities tended to wink at, in the simplistic mercantilist belief that outflows of gold from England must tend to weaken the British war effort.) In January 184, the Chancellor of the Exchequer authorized the Commissary-in-Chief, John Charles Merries, to 'employ that gentleman [Nathan] in most secret and confidential manner to collect in Germany, coins, not exceeding in value £600,000, which he may be able to procure within two months from the present time.' These were then to be delivered to British vessels at the Dutch port of Helvoetsluys and sent on to Wellington, who had by now crossed the Pyrenees into France. It was an immense operation, which depended on the brothers' ability to manage large-scale bullion transfers. They executed their commission so well that Wellington was soon writing to express his gratitude for the 'ample… supplies of money'. As Harries put it: 'Rothschild of this place has executed the various services entrusted to him in this line admirably well, and though a Jew [*sic*], we place a good deal of confidence in him.' By May 1814 Nathan had advanced nearly £1.2 to the government, double the amount envisaged in his original instructions.

"Mobilizing such vast amounts of gold even at the tail end of a war was risky, no doubt. Yet from the Rothschilds' point of view, the hefty commissions they were able to charge more than justified the risks. What made them so well suited to the task was that the brothers had a ready-made banking network within the family – Nathan in London, Amschel in Frankfurt, James (the youngest) in Paris, Carl in Amsterdam and Salomon roving wherever Nathan saw fit. Spread throughout Europe, the five Rothschilds were uniquely positioned to exploit price and exchange rate differences between markets, the process known as arbitrage. If the price of gold was higher in, say, Paris than in London, James in Paris would sell gold for bills of exchange, then send these to London, where Nathan would use them to buy a larger quantity of gold. The fact that their own transactions on Herries's behalf were big enough to affect such price differentials only added to the profitability of the business. In addition, the Rothschilds also handled some of the large subsidies paid to Britain's continental allies. By June 1814, Herries calculated that they had effected payments of this sort to a value of 12.6 million francs. 'Mr. Rothschild', remarked the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, had become 'a very useful friend'. As he told the Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, 'I do not know what we should have done without him…' By now his brothers had taken to calling Nathan the master of the Stock Exchange.

"After his abdication in April 1814, Napoleon had been exiled to the small

Italian island of Elba, which he proceeded to rule as an empire in miniature. It was too small to hold him. On 1 March 1815, to the consternation of the monarchs and ministers gathered to restore the old European order at the Congress of Vienna, he returned to France, determined to revive his Empire. Veterans of the *grande armée* rallied to his standard. Nathan Rothschild responded to this 'unpleasant news' by immediately resuming gold purchases, buying up all the bullion and coins he and his brothers could lay their hands on, and making it available to Herries for shipment to Wellington. In all, the Rothschilds provided gold coins worth more than £2 million – enough to fill 884 boxes and fifty-five casks. At the same time, Nathan offered to take care of a fresh round of subsidies to Britain's continental allies, bringing the total of his transactions with Herries in 1815 to just under £9.8 million. With commissions on all this business ranging from 2 to 6 per cent, Napoleon's return promised to make the Rothschilds rich men. Yet there was a risk that Nathan had underestimated. In furiously buying up such a huge quantity of gold, he had assumed that, as with all Napoleon's wars, this would be a long one. It was a near fatal miscalculation.

"Wellington famously called the Battle of Waterloo 'the nearest run thing you ever saw in your life'. After a day of brutal charges, countercharges and heroic defense, the belated arrival of the Prussian army finally proved decisive. For Wellington, it was a glorious victory. Not so for the Rothschilds. No doubt it was gratifying for Nathan Rothschild to receive the news of Napoleon's defeat first, thanks to the speed of his couriers, nearly forty-eight hours before Major Henry Percy delivered Wellington's official dispatch to the Cabinet. No matter how early it reached him, however, the news was anything but good from Nathan's point of view. He had expected nothing as decisive so soon. Now he and his brothers were sitting on top of a pile of cash that nobody needed – to pay for a war that was over. With the coming of peace, the great armies that had fought Napoleon could be disbanded, the coalition of allies dissolved. That meant no more soldiers' wages and no more subsidies to Britain's wartime allies. The price of gold, which had soared during the war, would be bound to fall. Nathan was faced not with the immense profits of legend but with heavy and growing losses.

"But there was one possible way out: the Rothschilds could use their gold to make a massive and hugely risky bet on the bond market. On 20 July 1815 the evening edition of the London *Courier* reported that Nathan had made 'great purchases of stock', meaning British government bonds. Nathan's gamble was that the British victory at Waterloo, and the prospect of a reduction in government borrowing, would send the price of British bonds soaring upwards. Nathan bought more and, as the price of consols duly began to rise, he kept on buying. Despite his brothers' desperate entreaties to realize profits, Nathan held his nerve for another year. Eventually, in late 1817, with bond prices up more than 40 per cent, he sold. Allowing for the effects on the purchasing power of sterling of inflation and economic growth, his profits were worth around £600 million today. It was one of the most audacious trades in financial history, one which snatched financial victory from the jaws of Napoleon's military defeat.

The resemblance between victor and vanquished was not lost on contemporaries. In the words of one of the partners at Barings, the Rothschilds' great rivals, 'I must candidly confess that I have not the nerve for his operations. They are generally well planned, with great cleverness and adroitness in execution – but he is in money and funds what Bonaparte was in war.' To the Austrian Chancellor Prince Metternich's secretary, the Rothschilds were simply *die Finanzbonaparten*. Others went still further, though not without a hint of irony. 'Money is the god of our time,' declared the German [Jewish] poet Heinrich Heine in March 1841, 'and Rothschild is his prophet.'

"To an extent that even today remains astonishing, the Rothschilds went on to dominate international finance in the half century after Waterloo. So extraordinary did this achievement seem to contemporaries that they often sought to explain it in mystical terms…

"The more prosaic reality was that the Rothschilds were able to build on their successes during the final phase of the Napoleonic Wars to establish themselves as the dominant players in an increasingly international London bond market. They did this by establishing a capital base and an information network that were soon far superior to those of their nearest rivals, the Barings. Between 1815 and 1859, it has been estimated that the London house issued fourteen different sovereign bonds with a face value of nearly £43 million, more than half the total issued by all banks in London. Although British government bonds were the principal security they marketed to investors, they also sold French, Prussian, Russian, Austrian, Neapolitan and Brazilian bonds. In addition, they all but monopolized bond issuance by the Belgian government after 1830. Typically, the Rothschilds would buy a tranche of new bonds outright from a government, charging a commission for distributing these to their network of brokers and investors throughout Europe, and remitting funds to the government only when all the instalments had been received from buyers. There would usually be a generous spread between the price the Rothschilds paid the sovereign borrower and the price they asked of investors (with room for an additional price 'run up' after the initial public offering). Of course, as we have seen, there had been large-scale international lending before, notably in Genoa, Antwerp and Amsterdam. But a distinguishing feature of the London bond market after 1815 was the Rothschilds' insistence that most new borrowers issue bonds denominated in sterling, rather than their own currency, and make interest payments in London or one of the other markets where the Rothschilds had branches. A new standard was set by their 1818 initial public offering of Prussian 5 per cent bonds, which – after protracted and often fraught negotiations – were issued not only in London, but also in Frankfurt, Berlin, Hamburg and Amsterdam. In his book *On the Traffic in State Bonds* (1825), the German legal expert Johann Heinrich Bender singled out this as one of the Rothschilds' most important financial innovations: 'Any owner of government bonds… can collect the interest at his convenience in several different places without any effort.' Bond issuance was by no means the only business the Rothschilds did, to be sure: they were also bond traders, currency arbitrageurs, bullion dealers and private bankers, as well as investors in insurance, mines and railways. Yet the bond market remained their core competence. Unlike their lesser competitors, the Rothschilds took pride in dealing only in what would now be called investment grade securities. No bond they issued in the 1820s was to default by 1829, despite a Latin American debt crisis in the middle of the decade (the first of many).

"With success came ever greater wealth. When Nathan died in 1836, his personal fortune was equivalent to 0.62 per cent of British national income. Between 1818 and 1852, the combined capital of the five Rothschild 'houses' (Frankfurt, London, Naples, Paris and Vienna) rose from £1.8 million to £9.8 million. As early as 1825 their combined capital was nine times greater than that of Baring Brothers and the Banque de France. By 1899, at £41 million, it exceeded the capital of the five biggest German join-stock banks put together. Increasingly, the firm became a multinational asset manager for the wealth of the managers' extended family. As their numbers grew from generation to generation, familial unity was maintained by a combination of periodically revised contracts between the five houses and a high level of intermarriage between cousins or between uncles and nieces. Of twenty-one marriages involving descendants of Nathan's father Mayer Amschel Rothschild that were solemnized between 1824 and 1877, no fewer than fifteen were between his direct descendants. In addition, the family's collective fidelity to the Jewish faith, at a time when some other Jewish families were slipping into apostasy or mixed marriage, strengthened their sense of common identity and purpose as 'the Caucasian [Jewish] royal family'."[390]

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[390] Ferguson, *The Ascent of Money,* New York: Penguin Press, 2008, pp. 78-88.

27. THE DARK SATANIC MILLS

The world as we know it today is largely the product of a dual revolution: the political - liberal and nationalist - revolution let loose in 1789-1815, and the scientific-industrial revolution started some time before, in the eighteenth century, but coming to fruition only in the nineteenth. Britain preceded France in both kinds of revolution, but it was the French whose slogan "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" and Declaration of Human Rights conquered the world, and whose national revolution inspired similar revolutions in so many other nations.

The industrial revolution was based on technological innovation and the acquisition of capital through the agrarian revolution. The essential feature of the latter was the "privatization" of the common land, which was accomplished through the Enclosure Acts of 1760 to 1830, enabling a new breed of capitalist landowners to make agriculture more efficient and increase agricultural output. This created a new surplus in food and market in agricultural produce, and the destruction of the feudal bonds that bound the peasants to the land that they worked and to the landowners for whom they worked.

The Enclosure Acts were in direct violation of the Charter of the Forest, established at the same time as Magna Carta in 1215, which imposed limits on privatization. This Charter, writes Noam Chomsky, "demanded protection of the commons [common land] from external power. The commons were the source of sustenance for the general population: their fuel, their food, their construction materials, whatever was essential for life. The forest was no primitive wilderness. It has been carefully developed over generations, maintained in common, its riches available to all, and preserved for future generations – practices found today primarily in traditional societies that are under threat throughout the world …"[391]

The privatization of the common land led to the creation of a large number of landless agricultural labourers who, in the absence of work in the countryside, sought it in the new industrial enterprises that were being created in the towns to exploit a series of important technological innovations.

These innovations did not all originate in England: the Jacquard loom, for example, which revolutionized silk weaving, originated in France before 1788. But it was the British who exploited it to drive down prices and increase profits. Moreover, they had plenty of their own.

"During the eighteenth century," writes Tombs, "there came an amazing succession of technological advances. Abraham Darby's iron smelting with coke (1709) bypassed the need for charcoal; Thomas Newcomen's steam engine (1712) permitted out the pumping out of deep coalmines; John Kay's flying shuttle

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[391] Chomsky, *Who Rules the World?*, London: Penguin, 2018, p. 86.

(1733) speeded up weaving; James Hargreaves's spinning jenny (c. 1765) multiplied the effectiveness of hand-spinning; Richard Arkwright's water frame (1769) used power for spinning with rollers; James Watt's condenser (1769) meant economical steam power; Samuel Crompton's mule (1779) began mass production of high-quality yarn; Henry Cort's rolling mill (1783) speeded up production of iron; Edmund Cartwright's loom (1787) enabled water and steam power to be used to make cloth. These transformed the productivity of workers and were continually improved. The focused ingenuity that produced them was found among the often self-taught artisans and businessmen who were already involved in the 'industrious revolution'. Ten 'macro-inventors' have been identified: those mentioned above, plus John Smeaton (engineering) and Josiah Wedgwood (pottery). Three had been to grammar schools and one, Cartwright (the son of a landed gentleman), to Oxford. The others had little schooling, but had learned technical skills through apprenticeship, adult education and experiment. Several had Dissenting connections. Ordinary people thus changed history.

"What made these ingenious labour-saving technologies worthwhile were the already high wages of English workers. Also, buoyant consumer demand ensured that new technology made profits. Cheaper products then further fed the growing demand for goods. Heavy investment in continuous technological development was thus viable in England. By contrast, spinning jennies were not taken up in France or India because labour was so cheap. The French government was eager to obtain technology from England by industrial espionage and by offering inducements to British entrepreneurs and workers. Significantly, this did not always succeed. In 1785, with the help of the ironmaster William Wilkinson, a huge plant producing the Continent's first coke-blast iron was built at Le Creuset, in eastern France. It soon became a white elephant. Where wages and demand were low and skills rare, expensive prestige projects rusted.

"The epoch-making technological innovation was to harness energy generated from coal, marking the beginning of a transition from what has been turned an 'organic economy' (wood-, wind-, water- and muscle-powered) to a 'mineral economy'. This permitted England to overtake Holland in wealth and India in manufacturing. It also did much to shape the country's economic, social and political geography, concentrating much of the new industrial activity near the coalfields of the Midlands and the north. England had very large coal deposits, which were indispensable to the Industrial Revolution. But so did many other parts of the world, including India. It was only in England that the mineral economy could take off, because it already had a sizeable coal industry (80% of Europe's production in 1700), principally to heat London, swollen by centuries of mercantile development. Early steam power – Newcomen's simple 'atmospheric engine' (c. 1712), which created a vacuum by heating and cooling steam – used so much coal that it was only viable at the pit head, where fuel costs were negligible. Continual improvements in fuel economy (such as Watt's condenser) gradually extended the use of steam, through it took until well into the nineteenth century to producing a transforming effect on the English and then the world economy through powered machinery, railways, steamships and later electricity generation. It would be more than two centuries before the global spread of the carbon economy began to pose an environmental threat to the very well-being it had created…"[392]

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While Ricardian theory and Rothschildian practice enabled a few to get rich quick – mainly those with initial capital and entrepreneurial skills, - for the great majority of Englishmen the nineteenth century meant the horror and squalor of William Blake's "satanic mills". If "freedom" in liberal theory means "freedom from", it certainly did not mean freedom from poverty, disease or death for the workers – many of them children - crowded together in filthy slums in towns like Manchester and Birmingham. The pollution of land, water and air was horrific - a quarter of Victorian Britons died from bad air.[393]

"During the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars," writes Sir Richard Evans, "Britain had forged ahead economically, leaving the European Continent far behind. Per capita industrial production in Britain in 1830 was almost twice that of Switzerland or Belgium, more than twice that of France, and three times that of the Habsburg Empire, Spain, Italy, Norway, Sweden, Denmark or the Netherlands.

"Linen and wool had long formed the basis of the textile industry. What was new in the late eighteenth century was the arrival of cotton, previously used mainly for printed fabric or calico, for mass consumption. By this time, England was mass-producing cloth from raw cotton grown with cheap labour in India and then exporting finished cotton products back to the subcontinent. In the American south, cotton was farmed by slaves, making it cheaper still. Soon cotton in Europe was replacing the more expensive linen and wool, which did not undergo mechanization until the 1820s or later, as the basic fabric used in clothing. Exports of raw cotton into Britain rose from 11 million pounds in weight in 1785 to 188 million in 1850, all used to manufacture cloth. India, meanwhile, was sent headlong into industrial decline, to be followed by Egypt, where the attempts of the local pasha, Muhammed Ali, to develop a cotton industry were undermined by the Anglo-Ottoman Convention of 1838. The British intervened the following year, after the pasha defeated an Ottoman army in battle and threatened to march on Constantinople. His monopoly on trade was forcibly abolished, and as Egypt was flooded with cheap British cotton products, the domestic industry collapsed. Britain's industrial advantage over the rest of the world was not the product of British ingenuity or inventiveness or other domestic factors. More than anything else, the explosion of cotton production in Britain was driven by world trade. In 1814, Britain was already exporting more cotton cloth than it sold at home; by 1850 the disparity had increased, with thirteen yards sold abroad for every eight in the UK. In 1820, 118 million yards of cotton cloth were sold to the European Continent, with 80 million going to the Americas (apart from the USA), Africa and Asia: by 1840 the comparable figures were 200 million and 529 million. British domination of the seas guaranteed a virtual monopoly for cotton sales to Latin America, which took a quarter as much cotton cloth as the European Continent in 1820 and half as much again twenty years later. Exports to India rose from 11 million yards in 1820 to 145 million in 1840. Cotton products made up nearly half the value of all British exports between 1816 and 1850. The growth of a new industrial economy in Britain after 1815 was not just the product of scientific or technological superiority, it was also the product of global empire…

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[392] Tombs, op. cit., pp. 376-379.

[393] Andrew Marr, *A History of the World,* London: Pan, 2012, p. 387.

"The industrial revolution was not confined to textile manufacture, but was in the longer run of even greater significance in the production of coal and iron. Here what marked out Britain from the rest of Europe in the industrial sphere was above all its early use of coal as a source of energy and its continued domination of coal production well into the second half of the century. Between 1815 and 1830 coal output in Britain virtually doubled, from 16 million tons a year to 30 million. As later as 1860, Britain was still producing more than twice as much coal as the whole of the rest of Europe put together. As demand grew, so mines had to be sunk deeper to access coal seams hundreds of feet below the surface. Water had to be pumped out of the mine, air circulated along the pits and galleries, gallery roofs held up with timber prop, coal hauled to the surface and taken away by specially built canals or, in the 1840s increasingly, by rail. The need to pump water out of coalmines was a key factor in the development and refinement of the steam engine, but the actual cutting of coal from the seam was done by hand. Production could only increased by bringing ever more miners to the coalfields, and areas where there were rich seams of coal, for example in south Wales, saw increasing numbers of immigrants drawn by the prospect of steady work.

"The work was dirty, difficult and dangerous…"[394]

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However, the industrial revolution nearly brought about political revolution. For there was a serious downside for the workers in the new industries, especially after the end of the war in 1815, that alarmed the great English Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822). An aristocrat by birth, he was expelled from Oxford for his radicalism and atheism and went with his wife Harriet to the Lake District in the North of England. "The Lake District," writes his biographer Jacqueline Mulhallen, "was not entirely wild and rural. There was a copper mine at Keswick, and small factories, probably for wool or cotton products as in neighbouring Westmorland. Since their hours were so long, it would have been difficult for Shelley to have gained knowledge of the conditions of factory workers through talking to them, but he did talk to working people whenever he had the opportunity. To Hitchener he wrote, 'I have beheld scenes of misery. The manufacture[r]s [factory workers] are reduced to starvation.' Shelley greatly appreciated the beautiful mountain scenery, but his attitude towards the factories was not purely an 'aesthetic' reaction, nor was he alone in his view. The workers themselves dreaded factories and mills as centres of exploitation, cruelty and immorality and child prisons where children worked twelve hours a day, going to sleep at their machines, and were locked up to prevent their running away. They were beginning to organize: spinners in the Manchester area had struck in 1810.

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[394] Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914,* London: Penguin, 2017, pp. 132-133, 139-140.

"In 1799, the Government had passed the Combination Acts which banned unions although, where employers needed workers, this legislation was not always heeded. There were some successful unions among the London shoemakers and tailors, but in 1810 the compositors on *The Times* were prosecuted for combining and other unions met in secret. Theoretically, the laws prevented employers from 'combining' too, but they were always used against working people. Weavers, like shoemakers of hatters, tended to be relatively prosperous self-employed artisans, working in small workshops. Their incomes were falling, so they petitioned the government only to find that it no longer acted for employees. They sank more and more into poverty and despair, and by 1811 a weaver was earning less than a poorly paid agricultural labourer. Agricultural labourers were also losing their work to mechanization, and whereas they had traditionally lived at the farmhouse, they now had the expense of food and housing. Many could not survive and sought poor relief.

"Framework knitters, who made stockings on a narrow frame, were self-employed specialized craftsmen. They petitioned Parliament for regulation of the industry because hosiers were ruining their trade by getting material knitted on a large frame and cutting it up into cheaper, poorer-quality shapes. The committees promised to look into it but had made arrests for sedition or for illegal union activity. In Nottingham, bands called 'Luddites', after Nick Ludd, a probably fictitious leader[395], broke into hosiers' shops and smashed the frames, supported by the local population. By November 1811, 2,000 troops were there. Shelley remarked, 'Curses light on them for their motives if they destroy one of its famine-wasted inhabitants.' Machines also threatened the livelihoods of the highly skilled croppers (cloth finishers). Machine breaking and food riots spread to Yorkshire, Cheshire and Lancashire, where £100,000 worth of property was destroyed. 121,000 troops were stationed between Leicester and York, more than in Spain. Employers felt they had a right to shoot at anyone attacking their shops. Luddites were killed or left to die, but when a Leeds employer was killed, Parliament passed a Framebreaking Bill (February 1812) making framebreaking a capital offence.

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[395] According to Andrew Marr, the Luddites took their name "from a fictitious woodland freedom fighter called King Lud" (*A History of the World,* London: Pan, 2012, p. 401). (V.M.)

"The bill was too late to hang those arrested at Nottingham and the success of the Nottinghamshire Luddites led them to organize a national union. It was broken within the year by a 'combination' of employers, their association was also illegal under the 1799 Combination Acts, but they were not prosecuted."[396]

The Luddites spread through the region from 1811 to 1816, and it ended up, writes Marr, "clashing with the army. Many were hanged or sent to Australia. In 1830, agricultural workers in Kent began the 'Swing Riots' – another attack on the new job-destroying technology: in this case mechanized threshing machines."[397]

The Luddite rebellion exposed a profound dilemma at the heart of the industrial revolution, not only in the early nineteenth century but in every stage of its development: that as science and technology produce inventions that save labour and increase productivity, creating wealth and leisure for some, or even for very many, workers in the older industries lose their jobs and become poorer. This problem remains unsolved to the present day, when the threat is likely to come from robots…

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"As a result of the post-Waterloo recession," writes David Cannadine, "the years from 1815 to 1820 witnessed a protracted period of distress and unrest greater than anything that had taken place during the preceding quarter century. It was more widespread geographically, and it made a much greater impact in Britain's rapidly growing industrial towns and cities, especially in Lancashire and Yorkshire, and also in London itself. In some parts of the country, the trigger to popular agitation was the high price of bread; in parts of Lancashire and Nottingham there were protests against the introduction of machinery that threatened the jobs and livelihood of skilled workers; in Merthyr Tydfil in south Wales, there were riots against wage reductions; in Birmingham the unemployed took to the streets, and in Glasgow serious disorder led to bloodshed. But it was in London that the most famous disturbances took place at the end of 1816, when 'Orator' Henry Hunt addressed a meeting on 15 November at the Spa Fields, calling for parliamentary reform as the only way to prevent 'the people' being burdened by higher prices and higher levels of taxation. The meeting was attended by up to 10,000 people perched on top of a pike. There was a second meeting at the same location held early in December, but before Hunt could address it, the protest was taken over by the even more radical Thomas Spence. It was widely – perhaps wildly? – rumoured that there were revolutionary plots to capture the Tower of London and even take over the Bank of England, and they were given mild credence when, early in the new year, a stone was thrown at the Prince Regent as he made his way to parliament.

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[396] Mulhallen, *Shelley*, London: PlutoPress, pp. 41-42.

[397] Marr, op. cit., p.402.

"This was a very febrile atmosphere, in which a secret committee reported in February 1817 that the distress of the laboring and manufacturing classes had been exploited by dangerous radicals seeking 'a total overthrow of all existing establishments'. This may have been exaggerated, but the economy remained depressed, and some plans were laid in such areas as Yorkshire and the east Midlands for a general uprising. More particularly, in the following month, unemployed Manchester weavers set out on an abortive protest march to London, and in June 1817 there was an equally futile display of dissent from unemployed framework knitters. During the second half of the year there was a better harvest, and trade began to pick up, and 1818 witnessed less radical protest and political activity. But the following year saw renewed economic distress, short-time working and high unemployment, as well as increased numbers of protest meetings calling for an end to high taxes and 'Old Corruption' and for significant parliamentary reform. In January 1819 mass meetings were held in London, Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester, many of them addressed by Orator Hunt. In August, against a background of rising tension and amidst reports that revolution was being plotted by the industrial workers of Lancashire, Hunt was invited back to Manchester to address a meeting at St. Peter's Field, attended by at least 60,000 people carrying banners with revolutionary inscriptions. There was no disorder, but the magistrates lost their nerve, and sent in the local yeomanry to break up the meeting. The result was that 600 of the crowd were injured, and between eleven and seventeen people were either killed outright or later died of their injuries. The incident was soon dubbed 'the Peterloo Massacre', in satirical homage to Wellington's battle with Napoleon, and resulted in widespread indignation. Indeed, for the rest of 1819 the radical cause became truly national for the first time, and there were riots and protests up and down the country.

"Matters did not ease during the following year. A recently released prisoner, Arthur Thistlewood, who had been involve in the Spa Fields riot of 1816, and was a known associate of Thomas Spence, hatched a wholly unrealistic plan for the seizure of London and the assassination of the entire [Lord] Liverpool cabinet, which he hoped would lead to a general and revolutionary insurrection. The so-called 'Cato Street Conspiracy' was planned to take place on 23 February 1820; but thanks to informers the details were already known to the authorities, the conspirators were duly arrested, and five of them, including Thistlewood, were executed for high treason on 1 May. The timing of the conspiracy had been partly determined by the death of George III in January 1820. Thistlewood and his friends thought the ensuing period of uncertainty, with a new and unpopular monarch not yet established, was the ideal time to strike. They were wrong to think their own cause would prosper; but they were right to think the new monarch's would not. George IV came to the throne with a well-earned reputation for sexual and financial irresponsibility; he was also determined to divorce his wife, Queen Caroline, who was as morally wayward as he was, and from whom he had been estranged from the very beginning of their marriage. But while the king urged Lord Liverpool's government to introduce a Bill of Pains and Penalties in the Lords as a preliminary to a divorce, Caroline returned to London in June 1820 from what had been her long an licentious continental exile, and implausibly yet persuasively represented herself as the people's champion against a corrupt government and monarch. She was welcomed by large and enthusiastic crowds, she was lionized in the radical press, and petitions rained down on parliament in her support. Having only passed the Lords by a narrow margin, the government withdrew the Bill, rather than risk defeat in the Commons, and the streets of London were illuminated as radicals celebrated their great triumph. But it soon turned to ashes: the Queen was no real friend of the people or a champion of liberty, she accepted a state pension, made a laughing stock of herself at the King's coronation, and in August 1821 she died…"[398]

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In response to worker discontent, the government made "some early attempts at social amelioration. Expenditure on poor relief, which was largely paid for by landowners, increased from £4.1 million in 1802 to £5.7 million in 1815-16, peaked at £7.9 million in 1817-18, and remained high thereafter. In 1817 the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nicholas Vanstitrart, steered through parliament the Poor Employment Act, which made available £1.75 million in the form of exchequer bills to individuals or corporations willing to invest in employment-generating public works schemes; the money was expended on cutting canals, making roads and draining marshes to bring more land under cultivation. These schemes marked a notable extension in state-sponsored activity. In 1819 the government carried the Cotton Factory Act, which was a significant piece of social legislation because it forbade the employment of children under the age of nine, and limited the hours of work for those aged between nine and sixteen to twelve hours a day. Three years later, the first measure was passed regulating the treatment of animals, which made it a crime to treat cattle, oxen, horses and sheep cruelly or to inflict unnecessary suffering on them, and the first prosecution was brought soon after. This beginning represented a significant change in sensibility (and it would be reinforced by the founding of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in 1824). These early interventions by the state into the workings of the free market were only of the most tentative kind, and throughout the nineteenth century there would be strong parliamentary opposition to any further such intervention, as Gladstone would later discover when trying to deal with the vexed problem of Irish land. But even in an age where the prevailing ideology was one of laissez-faire, such interventions indicated that government regulation of the market and of private property would become an increasingly important and contentious issue.

"At the same time, Lord Liverpool's government sought to respond to the growing concerns… that the Church of England was no longer engaging pastorally with the inhabitants of the nation's industrializing towns and expanding cities, and was thus becoming increasingly vulnerable to radical and

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[398] Cannadine, pp. 130-132.

Nonconformist criticism. In 1817 a committee was appointed to form a society for 'promoting public worship by obtaining additional church room for the middle and lower classes', while in the following year parliament granted £1 million for the building of new churches and set up a Commission to oversee the disbursement of this money and the construction of the buildings. Liverpool regarded this as the 'most important' measure he had ever introduced. In some cases the Commission provided the entire sum to fund the costs of construction, whereas in others the difference was met by private donations and public subscription; in no cased did the Commissioners make a grant in excess of £20,000.By February 1811 eighty-five churches had been constructed, with seating for almost 150,000 worshippers; but almost all the money had been spent, so applications for twenty-five more churches were postponed because of lack of funds. Three years later, a further £500,000 was made available by a second parliamentary grant, which was given out in smaller sums and spread more widely, helping to fund the construction of an additional 500 churches. Here was another unprecedented state intervention, to promote the state religion in the aftermath of war, revolution, population growth and massive urbanization; but the construction of these 'Waterloo Churches' or 'Commissioners' Churches', as they were known, did not fully solve the problem of providing sufficient Anglican places of worship in the rapidly expanding towns and cities of the British Isles. On the other hand, the church may have been more successful when it came to the provision of elementary education; by 1820 the majority of children attended a school for some part of their childhood, and most of the British population was basically literate, though rates were lower than in France, Prussia or Scandinavia."[399]

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A revolution in the understanding of the purpose of government took place in Britain at this time. Although the country had been supposedly a parliamentary democracy since the seventeenth century, in fact it had been an oligarchy governed by an aristocratic land-owning elite that had seen the purpose of government as primarily the defence of the realm and the obtaining of the necessary funds to realize that aim. The government did not see its purpose in serving the people in other ways, still less in following the will of the people or anything that smacked of French-style liberalism. Typical in this respect was the Duke of Wellington, the victor of Waterloo, who as prime minister was especially deaf to the persistent demands for the reform of the constitution to get rid of unrepresentative "rotten boroughs" (boroughs with very small numbers of constituents, effectively in the control of the local landlord) and extend the franchise to the new cities and a larger section of a burgeoning population. However, the tentative welfare reforms of the administration of Lord Liverpool in the 1820s changed that. Wellington, though recalled to the premiership after the death of Liverpool in 1828, was soon forced to resign as revolutionary tensions rose again towards the end of the decade, and the Catholic

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[399] Cannadine, op. cit., pp. 137-139.

Emancipation and Great Reform Acts of 1830-32 marked the beginning of a decade of welfare reform that stabilized the country.

"The Reform Act," writes Gordon Kerr, "changed British politics forever. The relationship of government, Parliament, the electorate and the public was irredeemably altered. Without the corrupt influence of the rotten boroughs and their powerful patrons, the House of Commons gained a new importance. MPs now paid less attention to the government of the day and instead turned more to the electorate and the general public. Constituency issues took on a new importance and public opinion now had to be listened to. The consequences of ignoring it could be seen in events across the Channel. The old patrician, authoritarian government style was a thing of the past and single constituency issues could bring down a government…"[400]

Undoubtedly this made for a more truly democratic government. But it also made it, like all democratic governments, more short-term in its vision. A truly good government must not only pay heed to the demands of the people: it must be able to see the true, spiritual needs of the people in the long term, and have the power to fulfill those needs however strong the clamour for short-term satisfaction of local demands.

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[400] Kerr, *Short History of the Victorian Era,* Harpenden: Oldcastle Books, 2019, pp. 21-22.

28. THE BRITISH EMPIRE

"The end of the titanic struggle with France in 1815," writes Tombs, "left Britain the first global hegemon in history, a position only otherwise occupied by the United States in 1989. Its naval power maximized its strength, enabling some 45 percent of its forces to be deployed overseas at the end of the war. Yet there were limits to its power, some self-imposed. Policy after Waterloo was defensive: 'It is not our business to collect trophies,' wrote the Foreign Secretary, Lord Castlereagh, to the Prime Minister, 'but to try [to] bring the world back to peaceful habits.' An unwitting tribute was paid by Napoleon: 'Castlereagh had the Continent at his mercy… And he made peace as if he had been defeated. The imbecile!'… There was irresistible pressure to reduce taxation and debt. The navy was rapidly cut back to a peacetime footing, with nearly 90 percent of its officers unemployed, and the number of ships in commission falling from 713 in 1814 to 121 in 1818. All governments throughout the century were as parsimonious as they could be, pressed by lobbies that combined equal devotion to peace and cheap government. Gladstone's Liberal government in the 1860s, for example, was so keen to reduce the costs of empire that it was happy to contemplate 'friendly relaxation' of links with the colonies, or even 'separation', and it shrugged off the queen's complaint that Britain was being reduced to 'a second-rate power'. Military spending was generally 2-3 percent of national income – about the same as today – but Britain's wealth meant that this represented more money than in any other state except sometimes France. Yet it often seemed (as a senior officer admitted in 1899) that Britain was 'attempting to maintain the largest empire the world has ever seen with instruments and reserves that would be insufficient for a third-class Military Power'.

"With limited material forces, it had to deal with robustly independent and relatively powerful European states. The navy, master of the oceans, had 40,000 – 50,000 men in mid-century, about the same as today. Its reach, as was often wryly observed, depended on there being water. The army was never more than a sizeable colonial police force by comparison with those of the other Great Powers. In 1857, on the eve of the Great Mutiny, there were only 23,000 British soldiers in the whole of northern India from the Khyber Pass to Rangoon, fewer than in Northern Ireland in the 1980s; and there were more British troops in Afghanistan in 2012 than in any of the Victorian Afghan wars. So the army was often over-exposed, sometimes disastrously so: 700 British troops, 3,800 Indian and 12,000 civilians were massacred in Afghanistan in 1841, another 1,700 men wiped out at Isandlwana in Zululand in 1879, and half a brigade lost at Marwand in Afghanistan in 1880. The Foreign Office in the 1820s had a staff of 36, and the separate Diplomatic Service remained unchanged between the 1860s and the 1910s at under 150 men, compared with a combined total of over 6,000 today. The Colonial Office numbered 113 clerks in 1903 – half the U.K. Ministry of Defence's press office today – to oversee an empire that consisted of over 100 separated political units (not including some 600 Indian princely states). The Indian civil service in the late nineteenth century numbered no more than 2,000 – smaller than OFSTED, the school inspection service, today. Many, at the time and since, have emphasized the fragility and even the illusory nature of British power during the once-vaunted 'Pax Britannica'.

"Yet if we look from the outside, as if from Paris, St. Petersburg or Constantinople, the picture is different. Britain was effectively invulnerable: all other major states, including the United States and Japan, were invaded during the nineteenth century, some several times. But no potential enemy since Napoleon has ever seriously prepared an invasion of Britain, and he would probably have failed if he mounted it; Hitler got no further than aspiration. No one between 1815 and 1914 dreamed of threatening its security in Europe. No major state until Japan in 1941 calculatedly attacked its empire. All were deterred by its naval power, its huge financial and economic capacity, and its ability to strike without being struck. Its dominance of the seas made any repetition of the global conflicts of the eighteenth century impossible, and restrained the imperialist ambitions of European powers. Simon Bolivar, the early-nineteenth-century South American revolutionary leader, declared that 'only England, mistress of the seas, can protect us against the united force of European reaction.' Despite continual complaints about excessive naval spending over the century, the Royal Navy maintained overwhelming superiority: in the 1880s it had thirty-eight large battleships, while all other navies combined had only forty; and although the numerical superiority declined later in the century as other countries built, it still maintained a 'two-power standard', a navy larger than those of the two next strongest naval powers combined. A striking sign of power is that in major areas Britain got its way, and even got more than it wanted. It had not wanted to rule Egypt, for example, but eventually did; the French did want it, but could not get it. It obtained practically all it wanted economically in South America without needing major political intervention. The most important international consequence of British naval power was to provide a guarantee of open international trading conditions for everyone, fostering an economic globalization in many ways more complete than in the twenty-first century, and, unlike previous periods of partial globalization, driven more by technology than by violence."[401]

Britain's largely peaceful hegemony rested on her naval supremacy and industrial might. "Between 1760 and 1830," writes Paul Kennedy, "the United Kingdom was responsible for around 'two-thirds of Europe's industrial growth of output'; and its share of world manufacturing production leaped from 1.9 to 9.5 per cent; in the next thirty years, British industrial expansion pushed that figure to 19.9 per cent, despite the spread of the new technology to other countries in the West. Around 1860, which was probably when the country reached its zenith in relative terms, the United Kingdom produced 53 per cent of the world's iron and 50 per cent of its coal and lignite, and consumed just under half of the raw cotton output of the world. 'With 2 per cent of the world's population and 10 per cent of Europe's, the United Kingdom would seem to have had a capacity in modern industries equal to 40-45 per cent of the world's potential and 55-60 per cent of that in Europe. Its energy consumption from modern sources (coal, lignite, oil) was five times that of either the United States or Prussia/Germany, six times that of France, and 155 times that of Russia! It alone was responsible for one-fifth of the trade in manufactured goods. Over one-third of the world's merchant marine flew under the British flag and that share was steadily increasing. It was no surprise that the mid-Victorians exulted at their unique state being now (as the economist Jevons put it in 1865) the trading centre of the universe: 'The plains of North America are our corn fields; Chicago and Odess our granaries; Canada and the Baltic are our timber forests; Australasia contains our sheep and on the western prairies of North America are our herds of oxen; Peru sends her silver, and the gold of South Africa and Australia flows to London; the Hindus and the Chinese grow our tea for us, and our coffee, sugar and spice plantations are in all the Indies. Spain and France are our vineyards and the Mediterranean our fruit garden; and our cotton grounds, which for long have occupied the Southern United States, are now being extended everywhere in the warm regions of the earth.'"[402]

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[401] Tombs, op. cit., pp. 540-544.

The mid-Victorians saw the British empire as the successor of the Roman. Thus on June 25, 1850 Lord Palmerston declared in the House of Commons: "As the Roman, in days of old, held himself free from indignity, when he could say *Civis Romanus sum* [I am a Roman citizen]; so also a British subject, in whatever land he may be, shall feel confident that the watchful eye and the strong arm of England will protect him against injustice and wrong."

To which the classical scholar William Evert Gladstone replied in a similar vein: "What then, Sir, was a Roman citizen? He was the member of a privileged caste: he belonged to a conquering race, to a nation that held all others bound down by the strong arm of power. For him there was to be an exceptional system of law; for him principles were to be asserted, and by him rights were to be enjoyed, that were denied to the rest of the world. Is such, then, the view of the noble lord, as to the relation that is to subsist between England and other countries?"[403]

It was; and for the time being there was nobody to gainsay these masters of the universe.

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That the British Empire, like all great empires, had a religious underpinning is illustrated by William Blake's hymn *Jerusalem* – so popular even to this day in England:

And did those feet in ancient time,
Walk upon England's mountains green:

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[402] Kennedy, op. cit., pp. 193-194.

[403] Palmerston and Gladstone, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 680.

And was the holy Lamb of God,
On England's pleasant pastures seen!
And did the Countenance Divine,
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?
And was Jerusalem builded here,
Among these dark Satanic Mills?
Bring me my Bow of burning gold;
Bring me my Arrows of desire:
Bring me my Spear: O clouds unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of fire!
I will not cease from Mental Fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand:
Till we have built Jerusalem,
***In England's green & pleasant Land*.**

Of course, Blake was speaking about the building of Jerusalem in England, not in a global empire. But subconsciously the two ideas merged into one. If England had been visited by Christ (by tradition, as a twelve-year-old boy, in the company of St. Joseph of Arimathaea), and was the New Jerusalem, then Englishmen had the right – nay, the duty - to export their supremely Christian and moral dominion throughout the world… There were echoes here of the Third Rome messianism of Russian Orthodoxy: England was the Third Rome, and there would be no fourth.

And truly, writes Tombs, "the British saw themselves as having duties as well as interests, and, like other powerful peoples, saw their interests as the interests of all, spreading Christian civilization, breaking down vested interests, encouraging toleration, opening communications, and promoting international commerce. Governments upheld what they saw as the national interest and very rarely allowed themselves to be dictated by lobbies: they manipulated business interests rather than being manipulated by them. The broad aim was to project a favourable image of Britain as embodying constitutional freedoms, humanitarian rights and the rule of law. British politicians often felt moral pressure to intervene where states were failing or non-existent, most extensively in India and Africa. Inaction was seen as a shameful dereliction of duty. It was strongly felt to be an obligation to provide leadership and assist the forces of progress, preferably by peaceful means, but by force if necessary against 'barbarity'. The moralizing, missionary aspect of nineteenth-century politics should not be underestimate, despite Cecil Rhodes's cynical quip that empire was philanthropy plus 5 percent profit. So Britain was diplomatically very active and at war somewhere most of the time. There was lethal arrogance here, combined with naïvely optimistic generosity believing that the freedom and prosperity England had recently secured should be spread…

"The ideological foundations of foreign policy were above all Whig ideas of English history as the triumph of Progress. This led Charles James Fox to commit the Whigs to supporting 'civil and religious liberties all over the world'. Tories – often accused from Castlereagh onwards of complicity with reactionary regimes

– did tend to be less assertive and 'ethical', though these were differences of degree. For generations, much of the energy came from evangelical Anglicans the Nonconformist conscience – what we might call the 'religious left'. Radicals, both secular and Christian, believed in the universality of progressive values, which they considered Britain had a duty to uphold. The most pugnacious exponent of this muscular liberalism was Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston (1784-1865), whose career spanned six decades. He was Secretary of War as early as 1809, Foreign Secretary from 1830 to 1741 and 1846 to 1851, and Prime Minister from 1855 to 1858 and 1859 to 1863 – the zenith of British power and overseas activity. Palmerston was a cosmopolitan Anglo-Irishman who liked to play John Bull: he could say unashamedly that inferior states needed to feel his stick across their shoulders from time to time, and also say that the extinction of the Atlantic slave trade was the greatest moment of his career. The brutality and the humanitarianism emerged from the same frame of mind."[404]

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[404] Tombs, op. cit., pp. 544-545.

29. THE ORIGINS OF NATIONALISM

Nationalism did not originate, of course, with the French revolution. Long before, the older states such as France and England and Spain had national feelings. What the revolution did was turn this *a feeling or passion into a doctrine or religion*.

"By 1815," writes Tim Blanning, "in most parts of Europe the claims of the state to a monopoly of legislation and allegiance were established in fact if not in law. Although there was a rich multiplicity of constitutional forms, ranging from democracy to autocracy, behind them all lay the sovereignty of an abstraction – the state.... But the blood that ran through the veins of the state was thin and tepid. To motivate its members, the transfusion of something more inspiring was needed. Increasingly, that was found in nationalism, a secular religion with the ability to unleash devotion and hatred just as fierce as anything experienced in the conflicts of the earlier period..."[405]

We need to distinguish clearly between the concepts of the nation or nationhood, national feeling or consciousness, and nationalism.

"Nationhood," writes Sir Geoffrey Hosking, "has two main aspects. One is civic: a nation is a participating citizenry, participating in the sense of being involved in law-making, law-adjudication and government, through elected central and local assemblies, through courts and tribunals, and also as members of political parties, interest groups, voluntary associations and other institutions of civil society. The second aspect of nationhood is ethnic: a nation is a community bound together by sharing a common language, culture, traditions, history, economy and territory. In some nation, for historical reasons, one aspect predominates over the other: the French, Swiss and American nations are primarily 'civic', while the German and East European nations have tended to emphasize ethnicity."[406]

Liberals tend to see the civic nation as superseding the ethnic nation; as civic institutions develop, it is assumed, the ethnic nation will simply "wither away". But this is by no means always or even often the case. As the history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries abundantly demonstrates, the development of the civic nation may go hand in hand with the development and strengthening of the ethnic nation. In fact, the institutions of civil society may be instrumental in resurrecting the ethnic nation.

Clearly the civic concept of the nation is the more modern, having come into being with the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. It is also closer to liberalism and democratism. The second, ethnic concept is much older and, I would suggest, more fundamental. It can coexist and interact with the civic nation, but has different roots.

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[405] Blanning, *The Pursuit of Glory, Europe 1648-1815,* London: Penguin, 2008, p. xxiv.

[406] Hosking, *Russia. People and Empire,* London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. xx.

National consciousness, the feeling of belonging to a nation to which one owes loyalty and love, is as old as recorded history. A feeling of nationhood is already evident among the seventy souls that descended into Egypt under the leadership of the Patriarch Jacob. This feeling became stronger when the Egyptians began to persecute the Israelites (by this time, there were four hundred thousand of them) and Moses stood up in their defence; and in general we see that national feeling is strengthened under conditions of persecution and war. Thus Greek nationhood blossomed during the conflict with Persia, and Roman nationhood during the conflict with Carthage. In medieval times, English national feeling was strengthened through the conflict of the Saxon peasants with their Norman and Plantagenet conquerors, and French national feeling – through their conflict with the English during the Hundred Years' War. In modern times, German and Italian nationalism was strengthened through the conflict with revolutionary France.

The morbid tendency that we call "nationalism" must be distinguished from the normal and healthy tendency that we call national consciousness or patriotism. Sir Isaiah Berlin sees it as having been born in the German Counter-Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, and as being defined in terms of four characteristics: "the belief in the overriding need to belong to a nation; in the organic relationships of all the elements that constitute a nation; in the value of our own simply because it is ours; and, finally, faced by rival contenders for authority or loyalty, in the supremacy of its claims."[407]

It is "in the first place a response to a patronizing or disparaging attitude towards the traditional values of a society, the result of wounded pride and a sense of humiliation in its most socially conscious members, which in due course produce anger and self-assertion. This appears to be supported by the career of the paradigm of modern nationalism in the German reaction – from the conscious defence of German culture in the relatively mild literary patriotism of Thomasius and Lessing and their seventeenth-century forerunners, to Herder's assertion of cultural autonomy, until it leads in an outburst of aggressive chauvinism in Arndt, Jahn, Kõrner, Gõrres, during and after the Napoleonic invasion. But the story is plainly not so simple. Continuity of language, customs, occupation of a territory have existed since time immemorial. External aggression, not merely against tribes or peoples but against large societies unified by religion, or obedience to a single constituted authority, has, after all, occurred often enough in all parts of the globe. Yet neither in Europe, nor in Asia, neither in ancient times nor medieval, has this led to a specifically nationalist reaction: such has not been the response to defeat inflicted on Persians by Greeks, or on Greeks by Romans, or on Buddhists by Muslims, or on Greco-Roman civilization when it was overrun by Huns or Ottoman Turks, quite apart from all the innumerable smaller wars and destruction of native institutions by conquerors in either continent.

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[407] Berlin, "Nationalism", in *The Proper Study of Mankind,* London: Pimlico, 1998, p. 594.

"It seems clear, then, even to me who am not a historian or a sociologist, that while the infliction of a wound on the collective feeling of a society, or at least of its spiritual leaders, may be a necessary condition for the birth of nationalism, it is not a sufficient one; the society must, at least potentially, contain within itself a group or class of persons who are in search of a focus for loyalty or self-identification, or perhaps a base for power, no longer supplied by earlier forces for cohesion – tribal, or religious, or feudal, or dynastic, or military – such as was provided by the centralizing policies of the monarchies of France or Spain, and was not provided by the rulers of German lands. In some cases these conditions are created by the emergence of new social classes seeking control of a society against older rulers, secular or clerical. If to this is added the wound of conquest, or even cultural disparagement from without, of a society which has at any rate the beginnings of a national culture, the soil for the rise of nationalism may be prepared…"[408]

The eighteenth century was an age of profound religious and social disruption. In particular, faith in God as having a real influence on human affairs was being radically undermined – the preferred theology of most Enlightenment-influenced intellectuals (King Frederick of Prussia was one such intellectual, who was proud of his friendship with Voltaire), if they were not atheists, was a vague kind of Deism, according to which God created the world but then left it to develop without His intervention; the metaphor was of a clock being wound up and then left to tick of its own accord. As long as people believed in God, the allegiance to Him always came before any other allegiance, including that of the nation. This supreme loyalty was now undermined, creating a void in the hearts, if not of the simple people who still believed in God, at any rate of the sophisticated intellectuals…

Besides belief in God, several other important cultural factors that made up what Sir Roger Scruton calls the "pre-political membership" of a society, were being broken down. Sir Llewellyn Woodward identifies them as "family, church, craft, city". He sees nationalism as a reaction to the loss of these unifying elements: "An inquiry into the nationalist movements in Europe after 1815 brings out an element in them which is not found to the same extent in earlier times; an element of protest, or even fear, fear of the disintegration of the group to which one belonged, fear almost of a loss of identity and of being left an atom in a world of atoms. Such a fear was greater when other groups – family, church, craft, city were losing much of their old significance and the individual, especially in urban areas, though more free to choose, was also feeling himself more alone. The association of like with like had been one of the reasons for the formation of nation-states. Medieval loyalty was not to countries, but to persons or small groups… As late as the early eighteenth century the transfer of territory from one sovereign was not regarded as an affront to political morality. The retention of Gibraltar and Minorca by Great Britain in the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 was not considered by the losers as a moral offence. Gain of territory was the result of victory; loss of it, the result of defeat. A hundred years later the proceedings of the Congress of Vienna caused scandal to enlightened minority opinion in Europe. Transfer of territory had now become barter of souls, something against which this enlightened minority opinion protested as it protested against slavery. After another hundred years recognition of the right of national groups to determine their own political allegiance was thought essential to the removal of the causes of war. The Vienna treaty of 1815 put certain different national groups under a single sovereignty; the treaty of Versailles in 1919 divided multinational states as a means to lasting peace."[409]

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[408] Berlin, op. cit., pp. 594-595.

Also undermining society were (1) industrial-economic and (2) educational-linguistic-sociological factors. However, this disintegration made possible the emergence of new unities, including the civic nation.

(1) Industrial-Economic. The Industrial revolution, which was just beginning in the eighteenth century, undermined old economic communities, such as the village, the farm and the guild. However, by uniting different parts of the population into one economic nexus, it created the conditions for a stronger national-democratic, as opposed to local or regional or class consciousness. For, as Shlomo Sand writes, "only the post-agrarian world, with its altered division of labor – its distinctive social mobility and thriving new communications technologies – has produced conditions conducive to linguistic and cultural homogeneity, leading to an identity and self-awareness not confined to narrow elites or groups, as was always the case in the [pre-industrial] past, but now broadly manifest among the productive masses. Whereas earlier, in the era of the great empires, through the nature of the feudal and religious fabric, human societies had always been marked by definite cultural-linguistic divisions and strata, henceforth all the people – high and low, rich and poor, educated or not – would feel they belonged to a particular nation and, what is no less meaningful, would be convinced they belonged to it in equal degree.

"The consciousness of legal, civil and political equality – produced mainly by social mobility in the era of commercial, and later of industrialized, capitalism – created an umbrella under which everyone could share an identity. Whoever was not converted or included by it could not be a member of the national body, an immanent aspect of equality. It is this equality that underlies the political demand that construes 'the people' as a nation that warrants full self-government. The democratic aspect – 'the rule of the people' – is utterly modern and clearly distinguishes nations from the older social formations, such as tribes, peasant societies under dynastic monarchies, religious communities with internal hierarchies, even pre-modern 'peoples'.

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[409] Woodward, *Prelude to Modern Europe, 1815-1914,* London: Methuen, 1972, pp. 43, 44.

"No pre-modern human community manifested an inclusive sense of civil equality or a persistent desire for self-rule that was felt by the entire populace. But when people began to see themselves as sovereign creatures, there arises the consciousness, or illusion, that enables them to believe that they can rule themselves through political representation. This is the attitudinal core of all national expressions in the modern age…"[410]

Again, as Maria Hsia Chang writes, "the protean forces of industrialization began to link disparate peoples and communities together, ultimately transforming them into a single nation. In effect, nations were produced as a result of the peculiar functional requirements of the industrial economy. It is said that the logic of modern industry necessitated a common culture and language. Unlike the preindustrial agrarian society – where the economic units were small, isolated, self-sufficient villages of face-to-face relations – the industrial economy required a communication and transportation infrastructure that could connect geographically separated communities. The effective operation of this infrastructure, in turn, required a common language and cultural code so that parochial communities of local dialects and cultures could communicate in an abstract manner over space with strangers. Where a common language was absent, the state would have to impart that common tongue – and common culture – through a public school system. At the same time, the new industries attracted increasing numbers of migrants from the countryside to the cities. As people left their villages and farms for cities, they also left behind many of their previous attachments and became receptive to new identities.

"The transformative effects of industrialization were magnified by the rise of civil society, given impetus and justification by the philosophers of the Enlightenment. As ideas of self-government through political representation spread, previously unconnected masses began to identify with each other. More and more, new horizontal linkages replaced the feudal vertical relations between monarch and subject, eventually culminating in a collective consciousness and identity that congealed into nationalism."[411]

(2) Educational-Linguistic-Sociological. As the nineteenth century progressed, the universalist nationalism preached by figures such as Mazzini metamorphosed into the harder, more exclusive and aggressive kind preached by, for example, Garibaldi. "This development," as Sir Richard Evans writes, "depended in the first place on the establishment of national identities based on written language. At the time of the Restoration, levels of literacy, measured by the ability to sign a marriage register or an army recruitment form with one's name rather than with a cross, were patchy at best….

"Lacking a basis in a written national language, identity was firmly rooted not in nationality but in locality. 'Every valley,' commented an economist writing about the Pyrenees in 1837, 'is still a little world that differs from the neighbouring world as Mercury does from Uranus. Every village is a clan, a sort of state with its own patriotism.'…

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[410] Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish Nation,* London: Verso, 2009, pp. 348-39.

[411] Chang, *Return of the Dragon: China's Wounded Nationalism,* Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 2001, pp. 18-19.

"Entirely different languages existed side by side as the principal medium of communication in many parts of Europe. Minority languages were present in particular regions everywhere – Welsh, for example, or Scottish Gaelic, or Basque in north-west Spain, or Sami among the nomadic Lapps of northern Scandinavia. In Brittany it was reported in 1873 that the people 'do not speak French, and do not want to speak French'.[412] Some dialects were extremely localized. 'Change village, change language,' went one proverb in the French province of the Limousin. The smallest of the Slavic linguistic communities, the Lusatian Sorbs, continued to defy the influence of the surrounding majority of Germans well into the twentieth century. In Calabria, in southern Italy, people still spoke a version of Ancient Greek, probably deriving from the years of Byzantine occupation…

"What changed this fragmented situation was not only the spread of communications but also the expansion of elementary education, especially in the second half of the century. Many states attempted during this period to make primary schooling compulsory…

"Nationalists tried to develop a standard written and spoken language in order to justify their claim to a national identity and national statehood. Usually they chose some particular dialect. West Bulgarian dialect was used as the basis for the literary language in Bulgaria; in Italy it was the Tuscan dialect…

"Not just language, but also history, real and imagined, provided a basis for national identity. In Ireland the nationalist movement began by attempting to recover the autonomous institutions, including the Irish Parliament, abolished in the Act of Union of 1800. The cultural memory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a powerful state in early modern Europe until its dismemberment by Prussia, Austria and Russia in the eighteenth century, played a key role in Poland. A historical grounding for a national culture could not always be easy to create. For the supporters of Greek independence it seemed natural to call the civilization of Ancient Greece in evidence for the claim to statehood in the nineteenth century. The humanist scholar Adamantios Corais (1748-1833), who was educated at the University of Montpellier in south-eastern France, corresponded with Thomas Jefferson, and lived in Paris throughout the Revolution of 1789-94, attempted to revive this connection not only by publishing new editions of the Ancient Greek classics but also by propagating a new version of Demotic Greek, called *Katharevousa.* He aimed to purge the common spoken language of its foreign and particularly its Byzantine accretions and bring it as close as was practicable to the ancient form of the language. But the great mass of ordinary Greeks could not fully understand it and it never became common currency…

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[412] This illustrates the truth of Andrew Marr's remark: "Most Europeans either did not speak the language of whatever nation claimed to rule them, or spoke dialects that would have been incomprehensible in their capital cities' (*A History of the World,* London: Pan, 2012, p. 309). (V.M.)

"The spread of education, the increasing intensity of cross-border communications, the greater ease with which people could migrate from one country to another, the rise of tourism, and the growing trend for books to be translated from one language into others, did not, as some hoped, lead to greater international understanding…"[413]

Indeed; for speaking the same language does not mean thinking the same thoughts or having the same feelings. In fact, the knowledge that comes from reading the thoughts of foreigners may increase the sense of how different, how *foreign* they are. Books may unify, but they may also divide…

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Both liberals and nationalists adhere to the religion of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, but with different emphases. The liberal seeks to free the individual (from kings and feudal servitude): the nationalist – the nation (from more powerful nations or empires). The liberal seeks to make all citizens equal under the law (but not necessarily in wealth or inherited privilege): the nationalist seeks to make his nation equal in sovereignty (but not necessarily in power or prestige) to other nations.

It is with regard to fraternity that the two tendencies differ most. The liberal is not seeking the fraternity of *brothers* in the real sense but the much vaguer "fraternity" of co-citizenship and will instinctively seek to restrict citizenship to those of his own bourgeois, property-owning class. The nationalist, on the other hand, is likely to feel the loss of the old fraternities of "family, church, craft, city" more keenly, and therefore seeks the creation of new unities defined by blood or land or even a new language.

However, whatever its emphasis – towards the individual or the collective – this is a religion that is bound to fail. Especially with regard to real fraternity, which is the deepest desire of human beings. Where there is fraternity, a lack of liberty or equality can be tolerated, if not enjoyed; many servants or slaves are perfectly happy with their masters, or at any rate do not wish to remove them. But where there is no fraternity, nothing satisfies – hence the restlessness of nineteenth-century politics, even where it is not outrightly revolutionary or counter-revolutionary.

The fact is that, however political, economic and cultural conditions may bring people together, it is only religion that *truly* brings them together, as is reflected from the etymology of the word "religion" itself, which denotes "binding together". Moreover, even if a common religion unites men, this union is superficial and temporary if the religion in question is not *the true religion.* Thus a common religion united those who built the Tower of Babel, but this religion, being a false one, ultimately served only to hasten their division and dispersion throughout the world as separate communities speaking different languages. Throughout history, therefore, men have sought a common language and citizenship or brotherhood based on a common religion, but this dream is shattered by one or other of two tragedies. Either they choose a false religion, whose hidden contradictions sooner or later lead to the collapse of the universalist dream. Or they find the true religion, but their disobedience to that truth in all its purity allows particularist passions – including nationalism – to destroy the dream again…

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[413] Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914,* London: Penguin, 2017, pp. 480-481, 482, 483, 487-488,490.

30. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (1) FRANCE

France under Napoleon, writes Philip Bobbitt, became the first example of a new species, the "state-nation", which he clearly distinguishes from the later "nation-state". "A state-nation, is a state that mobilizes a nation - a national, ethno-cultural group - to act on behalf of a State. It can thus call on the revenues of all society, and on the human talent of all persons. But such a state does not exist to serve or take direction from the nation, as does the nation-state. This is quite clear in the case of Napoleonic France, which incorporated many nations within its territory, but suppressed nationalism wherever it encountered it outside France. It is equally true of the British Empire. By contrast, the nation-state, a later phenomenon, creates a state in order to benefit the nation it governs. This, of course, raises the familiar late-nineteenth century (and twentieth century) question of self-determination: when could or should a nation acquire its own state? This question is nonsense to the state-nation. One might say that the process of decolonization in the twentieth century was the confrontation of nascent nation-states like Ireland or India or Indochina with state-nations, like Britain and France...

"Thus Bonaparte's handling of the continental states arrayed against him reflected a shrewd appreciation of their constitutional basis. So long as he faced territorial states, he could outmaneuver their coalitions by offering one of their members substantial territorial cessions; that state realized that if these were refused, another state might accept offers made to it, thus bringing down the coalition and weakening the bargaining power of the resisting state. Russia, Prussia, and Austria each revealed a willingness to settle with France if offered a sufficient territorial inducement. This tactic had been well understood by Frederick the Great, but in him it was deployed for the limited territorial objectives of the territorial state. With Bonaparte, this technique was used in service of the unlimited, imperial objectives of the state-nation.

"France was transformed into a new constitutional entity... Bonaparte declared: 'Citizens, the Revolution is now settled in the principles which started it,' meaning that a new state had been created that embodied these principles. That state, however, was far different from what had been envisioned in the heady days of 1789. A referendum was now proposed to determine whether Bonaparte should be consul for life. This plebiscite resulted in an enthusiastic endorsement for a quasi-imperial regime. Fresh hostilities that reopened against England in May 1803 moved France further along the constitutional path of the state-nation. The French Senate in 1804 sent an address to Bonaparte after an assassination attempt, urging that the Consulate for Life be changed to an hereditary empire subject to a new public referendum. 'The government of the Republic,' the address stated, 'is now entrusted to an emperor. Napoleon Bonaparte, first consul, is Emperor of the French.'

"To repeat: the nation-state takes its legitimacy from putting the State in the service of its people; the state-nation asks rather that the people be put in the service of the State. The state-nation is not in the business of maintaining the welfare of the people; rather it is legitimated by forging a national consciousness, by fusing the nation with the State. Consider Napoleon's speech to the troops before entering Italy: 'All of you are consumed with a desire to extend the glory of the French people, all of you long to humiliate those arrogant kings who dare to contemplate putting us in fetters; all of you desire to dictate a glorious peace, one which will indemnify the Patrie for the immense sacrifices it has made; all of you wish to be able to say with pride as you return to your villages: "I was with the victorious army of Italy!"'

"This change forged a form of the State that apotheosized its glory within a system of great powers, bending the energies of often diverse national peoples to its service. Napoleon unsentimentally realized this source of his legitimacy: 'My power depends on my glory and my glories on the victories I have won. My power will fail if I do not feed it on new glories and new victories. Conquest has made me what I am and only conquest can enable me to hold my position.'" [414]

Indeed, for all his achievements as a politician, it is as a *warrior* that Napoleon is most famous. He recruited his 26 marshals on a strictly meritocratic basis; many of them were from plebeian backgrounds. Under superior leadership, and stirred up by the promise of glory, the soldiers were formed into a superb fighting force that had no equal in Europe.

This was unquestionably the most martial era yet in European history. As Harvey Sachs writes, "Between 1789 and 1815, the French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars had torn Europe apart. From the Atlantic's eastern shores all the way to Moscow, clashing ideologies had been transferred into clashing armies: the liberty-fraternity-equality banner was quickly bloodied by the revolutionaries' excesses, and its motto was then subverted by Napoleon, who used the ideal of exporting the Revolution as a tool for achieving domination of the whole Continent. However shocking the effects of the infant French Republic's guillotine may have been, the eighteen to forty thousand chopped-off heads that it produced during the Terror of 1792-96 were a statistical trifle in comparison with the results of the foreign wars that followed. Between 1796 and 1815, an estimated two and a half million soldiers and one million civilians met their deaths in the Napoleonic Wars. During virtually any of Napoleon's major battles, two or three times as many people were killed as had been executed by order of the Committee of Public Safety or other French Revolutionary groups throughout their existence. In the battle of Borodino alone, on September 7, 1812, the opposing armies of Russia and France lost far more soldiers than the United

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[414] Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles,* London: Penguin, 2002, pp. 146,149, 175-176, 176-177.

States would lose during a dozen years of fighting in Vietnam, and the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars lasted twice as long as the Vietnam War, four times as long as the First World War."[415]

Sir Richard Evans has even higher estimates of the numbers of lives lost. "It used to be thought," he writes, "that the damage inflicted by the French Revolutionary and `Napoleonic Wars was relatively light compared to the devastation wrought by later conflicts. Yet altogether, in twenty-three years of more or less continuous warfare that had swept back and forth across Europe in the wake of the French Revolution, an estimated five million people had died; compared to Europe's population as a whole, this was proportionately as many as, if not more than, those who died during the First World War. One if five Frenchmen born between 1790 and 1795 had perished during the conflicts…"[416]

This huge increase in war and bloodshed was the direct result of two factors: first, the sheer ruthlessness of the revolutionary ideology, which removed many of the inhibitions on killing in war, and secondly the rise of mass armies representing *the whole nation.* The American revolution, and then the Battle of Valmy in 1792, had seen the appearance of *the citizen army*, which now came to replace the aristocrat armies of the eighteenth century. Thus Barbara Ehrenreich writes: "If the mass armies of the early modern period had proletarianized the foot soldier, reducing him from the status of peasant to that of a cog in a machine, the revolutionary armies of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries now 'noble-ized' him. He too had a shot at glory; he too had 'honor' to defend; and he too possessed what had once been the trappings of the nobly born – a flag, for example, which now symbolized a vast population rather than a single dynasty. According to Vagts, 'The tricolor [flag of France] gratified emotions previously enjoyed only by the nobility. In short, the whole nation had become the nobility.'

"The trade-off for this elevation in status was that the average male now risked a much higher chance of dying in battle than had his peasant ancestors in the era of knightly combat. Napoleon was particularly wanton in his squandering of men as 'cannon fodder', expecting them not just to stand and shoot but to charge fearlessly at the enemy's artillery positions. He fielded the largest armies Europe had ever seen, numbering in the hundreds of thousands, and lost a total of 1.3 million to 1.5 million of his own men in the course of his campaigns – enough to leave a lasting dent in the population of the nation whose interests he supposedly fought to advance. In exchange for being 'noble-ized' by the new revolutionary ethos, the soldier was expected to more willingly 'give' his life, and in exchange for giving his life he would be given a share of glory.

"But the 'democratized glory' accessible to the average soldier was a strangely depersonalized version of the glory sought by members of the traditional warrior elite. The knight or samurai wanted glory for himself as an individual, or at most for his noble lineage. It was his own name that he announced in his battlefield challenge to the enemy, his own name that he hoped would be remembered forever in epics and *chansons*. But the kind of glory held out to men in the armies of George Washington, Napoleon Bonaparte, and all military leaders since their time can be thoroughly anonymous glory, of the kind celebrated in the peculiar institution of the tomb of the 'unknown soldier'. As Benedict Anderson writes: 'No more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism exist than cenotaphs and tombs of Unknown Soldiers. The public ceremonial reverence accorded those monuments precisely *because* no one knows who lies inside them, has no precedent in earlier times.'

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[415] Sachs, *The Ninth: Beethoven and the World in 1824,* London: Faber and Faber, 2010, pp. 61-62.

[416] Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914,* London: Penguin, 107, p. 3.

"This new kind of glory attached not to the individual but to a new kind of entity, the hypothetical collectivity which the French revolutionaries heralded as *la nation*. If the revolutionary armies encouraged individual initiative, they were still mass armies, like those of the old regime. Revolution may have empowered the individual, but the revolutionary armies were still a far cry from being collections of knights each charging off on his own pursuit of personal glory. Napoleon understood the difference and reserved the nation of 'glory' for the old knightly tradition; modern soldiers were not to confuse 'love of the fatherland' with 'love of glory'. To one of Napoleon's admirers, the Prussian philosopher Hegel, 'true valour' was not 'knightly valour' but, rather, 'the true valour of civilized nations is their readiness for sacrifice in the service of the state, so that the individual merely counts as one among many. Not personal courage, but integration into the universal is the important factor here.' And 'the universal', meaning the nation and, for Hegel, even more mystical entities beyond that, was in the first instance the modern mass army…"[417]

"In Benedict Anderson's memorable phrase," writes Ehrenreich, "nations are not natural but 'imagined communities', whose imagining has taken a great deal of conscious effort. In the European cases, intellectuals had to resurrect the folklore and epics which could be used to give people a sense of a common past. The printing press, along with the new market in what we now call 'information', had to publicize these findings to increasingly literate publics. State-sponsored schools had to impose a common vernacular language on what was often a hodge-podge of dialects and then educate people to literacy in it. Equally strenuous efforts were required in the third world, where national boundaries had often been laid down arbitrarily, for the convenience of the European colonialists.

"The work of Anderson, and of historian Eric Hobsbawm, has much to tell us about the creation of nations as a purely cognitive undertaking… What these scholars fail to explain, however, are the passions that attach themselves to the idea of the nation – the emotions of nationalism. In *Imagined Communities*, Anderson seems to promise at the beginning to explain the religious power of the nation over its citizens, but we are quickly immersed in the relatively bloodless business of 'imagining' – the construction of common languages and 'traditions', and so forth. The reason for this oversight, it seems to me, is that these writers, like most who owe something to the Marxist tradition, pay almost no attention to *war* as a factor shaping human societies. But what is France if not as defined against England or Germany? What is Serbia if not as defined against Germany or Croatia [or Ottoman Turkey]? From the very beginning, as the military historian Michael Howard has written, 'the principle of nationalism was almost indissolubly linked, both in theory and practice, with the idea of war.'

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[417] Ehrenreich, *Blood Rites,* London: Virago, 1998, pp. 191-193.

"… In the mass armies of pre-revolutionary and pre-nationalist Europe… the individual soldier knows that he is threatened by distant forces, foreigners who wish him dead. He knows too that he is, as an individual, helpless in the face of this threat. But he is not just an individual; he is a unit – as the constant drilling, if nothing else, convinces him – of something far larger and more powerful than himself. What he feels, as a result, is very different from the anomie sense, common to mass societies, of being only 'one of many', because in this case the many add up to something greater than the sum of the parts. What he feels is the confidence drawn from collective strength, which can amount, even in the face of death, to a kind of joy…

"Nationalism, however, is experienced not only by soldiers in armies. It is experienced, and often more strongly, by civilians who are far from any real danger and who have never drilled or fought. Nazi 'philosopher' Alfred Rosenberg understood the connection between civilian nationalism and the intense community forged in armies, writing in 1937: 'The German nation is just now about to find its style of life for good… It is the style of the marching column, regardless of where and for what purpose this marching column is to be used… It is a mark of the German style of life that no German wants nowadays to feel himself a private person.'

"In the age of nationalism, patriotic ceremonies begin to be designed, consciously or not, to give civilians the feeling that they, too, constitute a kind of 'army', united by common danger and bonded by rhythmic activities analogous to the drill. George L. Mosse observes that the nineteenth century saw 'the introduction of rhythm into all ceremonies – marches, parades, and festivals – in order to transform the undisciplined masses into a disciplined crowd'. The 'Marseillaise' was the first national anthem set to a marching beat; in imitation, other nations began to sing their anthems to similarly infectious and militant rhythm. By 'joining in the national liturgy [and] singing national anthems,' Mosse writes, large numbers of people now had the experience of 'sublimating themselves to the great national community.'…"[418]

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[418] Ehrenreich, op. cit., pp. 196-198. The Marseillaise was not only martial, but also very bloodthirsty: *Aux armes, citoyens! / Formez vos bataillons! / Marchez! Marchez! / Qu'un sang impur / Abreuve nos sillons!*

It should be remembered that, for Christians, there was always a larger supra-national community into which the individual could merge – his Church. However, Christian faith was sharply in decline throughout Europe; faith in the nation filled that void. National Churches might also bolster faith in the nation; but this created the danger that the National Church would become an appendage of the Nation, and the primacy and universalism of the faith in Christ would be weakened. Moreover, if Christian faith declined beyond a certain point, then the cult of the Nation completely took its place, becoming an object of worship – which is precisely what happened in this period. This meant a stand-off between the Nation and the Church, leading to, for example, the confiscation of the Papal States in Italy, and Bismarck's *Kulturkampf* against the Church.

"This awareness of 'something larger' into which the individual might merge is repeatedly expressed in nineteenth-century philosophical writings. Where economically oriented thinkers like Marx saw only the isolation and anomie induced by the capitalist economy, others, like Hegel before him and the philosopher J.G. Fichte, saw the emergence of a new collective identity through which, as Fichte put it, 'each single person becomes part of an organized whole and melts into one with it.' No doubt the two perspectives are, as Marx might say, dialectically connected: As the average citizen experienced an ever greater economic reality of individual isolation, he or she became more open to – and perhaps even eager for – the feeling of submergence within some larger community, no matter how vague and imaginary that community might be.

"… What *is* this new entity that men – and women, insofar as they also achieve the status of citizens – profess themselves willing to die for?

"The first clue is that the nation is not a static community, but one that is imagined as existing in time. As Anderson puts it, rather ornately, the nation is 'a sociological organism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time'. It has a past; it is nothing, in fact, without a past. Even brand-new nations attempt to situate themselves within some long-standing tradition (the human struggle for freedom and self-determination, for example) or recurring necessity ('When, in the course of human events…'). Much of the work of 'imagining' the nation as a community lies in the effort to resurrect or invent a national past, and this past is in most cases defined by war: Serbs look back to the battle of Kosovo in 1389; Americans look to Lexington and Bunker Hill. As Michael Howard has written: 'France *was* Marengo, Austerlitz and Jena: military triumph set the seal on the new-found national consciousness. Britain *was* Trafalgar – but it had been a nation for four hundred years, since those earlier battles Crécy and Agincourt. Russia *was* the triumph of 1812… Italy *was* Garibaldi and the Thousand… Could a Nation, in any true sense of the word, really be born without a war?' The nation, then, is our imagined link to the glorious deeds – or the terrible atrocities still awaiting revenge – that were performed by others long ago."[419]

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[419] Ehrenreich, op. cit., pp. 199-200.

Now this thesis needs heavy qualification. Not only were all the nations mentioned here created a long time before the battles mentioned[420]: their national identity was not *created* by war. What *is* true is that the new concept of nationhood that emerges after the French revolution places particular emphasis on war and on the decisive battle that, in their imagination, forged the nation. Again, loyalty to collectivities, as opposed to kings or dynasties, and the special glory of dying for one's country, is not a new phenomenon: *Dulce est pro patria mori* is a motto going back to classical antiquity. Nevertheless, it *is* true that the French revolution, culminating in Napoleon's despotism, introduced a pathological element of *nation-worship* that was certainly new in the context of the Catholic and Protestant West. Napoleon managed to persuade his fellow-countrymen that everything he did was for the glory of France, and that nothing was more important to him than that glory. And so while his despotism angered some Frenchmen, for most of them the boost to their pride was ample compensation for the loss of their freedom. "As Frenchmen accorded more and more weight to Napoleon's wishes," writes Cronin, "so the notion of honour came to the fore in the French Republic: honour and its sister concept, glory, patriotism *à outrance* and the chivalry that had made Napoleon crown Josephine."[421]

If the secular nation was the new Church, and Napoleon its new Christ[422], the revolution itself was the Holy Spirit. It blew where it wished, overthrowing kings, liberating subject peoples and making them into "real" nations. This liberation of nations was conceived at first as a democratic, egalitarian process; it by no means implied the superiority of any one nation over the others, which would simply be a repetition, on the collective level, of the despotism that the revolution had come to destroy. The religion of the French revolution was a universalist religion based on equal rights for all men *and all nations*. It was believed that once the kings had been removed, the general will of each nation would reveal itself, spreading peace not only within, but also between, nations. Thus "sooner or later," said Mirabeau to the National Assembly, "the influence of a nation that… has reduced the art of living to the simple notions of liberty and equality – notions endowed with irresistible charm for the human heart, and propagated in all the countries of the world – the influence of such a nation will undoubtedly conquer the whole of Europe for Truth, Moderation and Justice, not immediately perhaps, not in a single day…"[423]

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[420] A sense of English nationhood, for example, is discernible at least as early as King Alfred the Great or even the Venerable Bede in about 700… Bede entitled his most famous work *A History of the* English *Church and People*, although there was as yet no unified English state.

[421] Cronin, op. cit., p. 253.

[422] Christ Himself, according to a revolutionary pamphlet of 1790-91, "was a true *sans-culotte*, a full-blooded republican. He developed all the principles of moral equality and the purest patriotism. He faced every danger; he rebelled against the great who in all periods have abused their powers. He castigated the harshness of the rich; he attacked the pride of kings and priests. The Son of God rebelled against the aristocrats of the nation" (in Comby, op. cit., p. 114).

[423] Davies, op. cit., p. 675.

But it was not long before such noble sentiments were being transformed into a purely pagan pride. "'You are, among the nations, what Hercules was amongst the heroes,' Robespierre assured his countrymen. 'Nature has made you sturdy and powerful; your strength matches your virtue and your cause is that of the gods.' France was unique in her destiny, she was *La Grande Nation*, and all interests were necessarily subordinate to hers. Her service was the highest calling, since it naturally benefited mankind."[424]

Soon it became evident to other nations, whether those bordering France or her overseas colonies, that the French believed not so much in the *Nation* (i.e. any and every nation) as *the* Nation (one particular nation, the only truly *Great Nation*) – which could only be France. An example was Belgium, which, under the influence of the French Revolution, had done much to liberate itself from the Habsburgs of Austria – only to have despotism reimposed on them by Napoleon. Thus on January 19, 1795, with the help of the French, Dutch Patriots "took control of Amsterdam. William V had sailed into exile in England the previous night, and within days the whole country was in Patriot hands. But as they busied themselves planting liberty trees, their future was being decided in Paris. In May 1795 a Batavian Republic was established, at the cost of an indemnity of 100 million guilders, a huge loan to France at a trifling rate of interest and the cession to France of Maastricht, Venlo and Dutch Flanders. There was also an official pillage of the Stadholder's art collection. Belgium hardly did better. The Patriots were kept well away from power, and in October 1795 the whole country was annexed to France."[425]

Napoleon created a swathe of suffering and destruction throughout Europe from Lisbon to Moscow that had not been seen since the invasions of the Huns and the Goths (and not even then). In retrospect, the seemingly irrational and chaotic system of old Europe, whereby kings could buy and sell territories to which they were quite unrelated by birth or upbringing, turned out to have kept the peace far better than the system of more clearly defined, homogeneous nation-states that emerged as a result of the Napoleonic wars. This is not to say, of course, that some rationalization of especially the chaotic German state system was not desirable; not there were no wars under the old system. But they tended to be short in duration, with relatively few casualties, which were mainly confined to the noble warrior class. And they were very quickly patched up by some redistribution of territories among the monarchs. By contrast, the revolutionary wars that began after 1792 were more like the religious wars of pre-1648 vintage: much bloodier and crueler, involving far greater casualties among the civilian populations.[426] Moreover, they never came to a real end, since the losers felt bound to recover the territories lost and avenge the wounds inflicted on their national or regional pride. After all, if the people, and not the king, was now sovereign, victory in war had to be won over the people (or rather, the "enemies" of the people) as well as the king. Thus as Napoleon exported the ideals of Freedom, Equality and Fraternity into neighbouring countries, their freedom was destroyed, their equality with their "brothers" who had "liberated" them was jettisoned, and the dream of universal brotherhood became the nightmare of universal war. For "abroad, liberty simply meant French rule."[427]

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[424] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 110.

[425] Zamoyski, *Holy Madness,* p. 90.

[426] For example, during the siege of Saragossa in 1808-09, 54,000 Spanish civilians were killed. A French officer later recorded one episode: "With a petard, we brought down the door of the church, which the monks were defending to the death. Behind them a mass of men, women and children had taken refuge at the foot of the altar, and were crying for mercy. But the smoke was too thick for us to distinguish the victims we would have wished to spare. We wrought havoc everywhere, and death alone stifled their cries…" (in *The Economist*, December 31, 1999, p. 41).

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How did the internationalist dream turn into a nationalist nightmare? The problem was partly a conceptual one: it turned out to be notoriously difficult to define what "the nation" was, by what criteria it should be defined (territory? religion? blood? language?). Revolutionary definitions of who was a "patriot" – that is, the true member of the nation - invariably meant defining large sections of the population who did not accept this definition or did not come under it as being "aliens" or "traitors" or "enemies of the people".

But the problem went deeper: even when a certain degree of unanimity had been achieved in the definition of the nation, - as Napoleon achieved it for France, for example, in the period 1800-1813, - there were now no accepted limits on the national will, no authority higher than the nation itself. This inevitably resulted in the nationalism in the evil sense of the word that has become so tragically familiar to us in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries – not a natural pride in one's own nation and its achievements, but the exaltation of the nation to the level of divinity. Thus faith in the nation becomes the ultimate value, the defence of which justified any and every sacrifice of self and others. If in "Dark Age" (i.e. Orthodox) and Medieval (i.e. Roman Catholic) Europe, men had seen in the Church a higher, supranational authority which arranged "Truces of God" and served, at least in principle, as a higher court of appeal to which kings and nations submitted, this was now finally swept away by Article Three of the Rights of Man, which pitted the "general wills" of an ever-increasing number of sovereign nations against each other in apparently endless and irreconcilable hostility.

Unless, that is, they all recognized France, the revolutionary nation *par excellence*, as their own. And there were some who did this. Thomas Jefferson, for example, the American ambassador to Paris, said: "Every man has two countries – his own, and France."

Others, while not going that far, nevertheless welcomed the conquering French armies into their own land. Thus as late as 1806 the German philosopher Hegel called Napoleon "the world spirit" and hoped that he would defeat his opponents: “Everyone prays for the success of the French army”. Such a substitution of loyalty to the messianic revolutionary nation of the time rather than one’s own was to manifest itself again in the twentieth century, when millions of people around the world betrayed their own country for the sake of the greater glory of the Soviet Union…

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[427] Doyle, op. cit., p. 419.

However, as captivation turned to captivity, pious internationalism (i.e. French messianism) turned into violent xenophobia, and enthusiasm into disillusion. Among the nations that had been “forced to be free” by the French, only the Poles remained faithful to the Napoleonic vision. Perhaps because they, alone among the traditional nations of Europe, were completely under the domination of foreign powers…

We have seen that there was a religious element in the nationalism of the early nineteenth century. Or rather, in many cases it was a new religion to take the place of the old – usually Catholicism – in which the nationalists had lost faith. As Zamoyski writes: "Lafayette and his peers were natural believers. Most of them left the Christian Church at some stage, but they never eradicated God from their minds. They sought Him in nature, in art, in everything but religion. Some found Him in humanity, as represented by the nation. Robespierre described this faith as a 'tender, imperious, irresistible passion, the torment and delight of magnanimous souls', just as the great ecstatic saints had described their love of God. For him, 'this sacred love of the Patrie, this most sublime and holy love of humanity,' would one day find its spiritual consummation in the contemplation of 'the ravishing spectacle of universal happiness'. For Michelet, faith in the nation meant 'the salvation of all by all'. He hated Catholicism because it saved people individually, thereby undermining the love of the nation. 'No more individual salvation; God in all and all Messiahs!' he preached. In other words, salvation could only be achieved by, with and through the nation. 'We shall bring about the freedom of nations all over the world,' wrote Slowacki in November of the terrible year 1848, 'our blood and our body is the property of the world and will be its nourishment, strengthening those who have grown weak under oppression.'

"These were no mere rebels; they aspired to emulate Christ by immolating themselves for the sake of humanity. And they offered hope, not political solutions. The wars and revolutions they started or embraced were acts of faith. They were for the most part born of vague longing not specific grievance, and that was why they lingered on in the memory as glorious acts however dismal their outcome: grievances can fail to be righted, but hope can never be defeated.

"Devotion to the cause became the only and all-embracing purpose of their lives, more important than the achievement of its end. They sublimated the mission itself. They accepted its purpose without question, because to question it would have made nonsense of their sacrifices and their whole lives. This made them fear and denounce everything that smacked of lukewarm belief or heresy. In order to fortify themselves in the faith, they leaned on ritual, invoked exemplars and martyrs, and venerated relics. They had, in fact, created a faith and a church of their own, with all the trappings of the Christian one they affected to despise. And, as with all faiths, the ultimate longing, because it provided escape into another, and necessarily better, world, was death in the service of the cause. They were certainly all a little mad, but theirs was a devoted and holy madness."[428]

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[428] Zamoyski, *Holy Madness,* London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, pp. 449-450.

31. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (2) ITALY

Italy towards the end of the eighteenth century was a highly complex patchwork of individual states of various kinds not even united by a single language. Speakers of different Italian dialects were often incomprehensible to each other. Napoleon's invasion changed all that.

Napoleon put down any revolutionary violence (he claimed a monopoly of that), but he introduced many of the reforms of the earlier, liberal phase of the revolution: "secularization of church property and of education, equality before the law, freeing of serfs, religious toleration, civil rights for Jews, the civil code and civil marriage. The French built roads and canals, introduced standardized weights and measures and other reforms, many of which still exist today. Although the middle class benefited from the job opportunities in the bureaucracy and army, the peasants did not and deeply resented both conscription and the army living off the land. In the Neapolitan Republic, the poor who no longer had church charity, blamed the 'Jacobins' for their hardship."[429]

"Virtually everything the French did," writes Zamoyski, "advanced the cause of Italy's unification in one way or another. They overthrew the foreign rulers and reduced the temporal power of the Church. By the beginning of 1799 the whole peninsula was under French control, and every part of the country save Venice had some kind of bicameral body. These bodies and the administrations they commanded needed to be staffed, and this gave rise to a new administrative class. Bonaparte set up armed forces in every political unit he created. Formed up on French republican lines, these were citizen armies drawing in men from all walks of life. As promotion was on merit, they were an important tool for the social advance of the able from the lower orders, and a breeding-ground for patriots.

"In his 'Notes of Advice to the Cisalpine Patriots', the French representative of the people, Jullien, produced a set of guidelines for them. 'Oppose priestly mummeries with national festivals that appeal to the eyes and the imagination,' recommends Note 26. Note 27 urges them to 'give institutions to the people to regenerate them: create a new man. Multiply civil ceremonies having a moral aim, such as marriages, adoptions, schools or gymnasia, prize distributions, military exercises, races, games, and mass meetings.' The more enlightened of the existing priests were to be used to bring about change, by associating the words 'religion' and 'patrie'. The French imported the revolutionary passion for association and talk, and political clubs sprang up like weeds after rain wherever they passed. They were mainly Jacobin in inspiration, and they aped the style of their model. Discussions were emotional, with much wailing over the shackled motherland and veneration of France, 'the apostle of nations'. In July 1798, a huge crowd was gathered before an 'Altar of Liberty' in Rome. A heap of cardinals' hats, titles of nobility, papal insignia and the minutes of the Inquisition was stacked up in front of this, and ceremoniously ignited. One man broke a crucifix and threw it on the pyre, and then proceeded to 'de-baptize' himself by washing his hair.

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[429] Mulhallen, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

"Not all Italian patriots approved of such excesses, but whatever they thought of France, they could not do without her support. This was confirmed when, in the summer of 1799, the Bourbon King Ferdinand and his British allies regained possession of Naples, and the Austrian and Russian armies reoccupied the north. Many leading Italian patriots had to take refuge in France, and it was only when, in 1800, Bonaparte swept into Italy again, defeating the Austro-Russian forces at Marengo and eventually clearing the entire peninsula of France's enemies, that they were able to return.

"This time Bonaparte ordered things differently. He was no longer a revolutionary general but First Consul. A significant part of the 'liberated' territory was incorporated into France proper. The rest of northern Italy was lumped together into the Italian Republic which in 1805 became the kingdom of Italy, with Bonaparte, or the Emperor Napoleon as he became, as king. In the following year his brother Joseph became king of Naples, a throne which he relinquished two years later in favour of Joachim Murat, in order to ascend that of Spain. For the first time since the fall of the Roman Empire all the inhabitants of the peninsula were subject to the same legal system. They were also linked by a new network of good roads and posting stations, and these roads opened channels of communication, facilitating the dissemination of ideas."[430]

"In 1815, the Congress of Vienna not only allowed the Austrians to repossess what they had ruled before, but also gave Austria Venice and the right to intervene militarily in Italy if Austria's interests were threatened. The Pope got the Papal States back, Genoa was added to Piedmont-Sardinia and the kings [Ferdinand IV and Vittorio Emanuele] returned to their kingdoms, causing resentment in the islands [Sicily and Sardinia] where they had held court. Both kings purged the civil service, demoted army officers and handed education to the Jesuits, thus alienating those who had become an elite under Bonaparte. In Tuscany, the Grand Duke was not as liberal as his predecessor had been…"[431]

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Clearly, for the Italian nationalists, this post-Napoleonic situation was deeply disappointing… However, it stimulated the development of an indigenous Italian nationalism (as opposed to the foreign kind introduced by Napoleon from France), which developed in three main stages corresponding to the methods and ideas of three major leaders: Buonarotti, Mazzini and Garibaldi. Buonarotti's nationalism was quasi-communistic and conspiratorial. Mazzini's was romantic, altruistic and universalist in the sense that it longed for the liberation of all nations, not just his own. Garibaldi's was more hard-nosed, anti-religious and particularist.

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[430] Zamoyski, *Holy Madness,* pp. 116-117.
[431] Mulhallen, op. cit., p. 81.

Filippo Antonio Buonarotti (1761-1837), a native of Pisa, was a descendant of Michelangelo. "A freethinker and a radical he had long been suspect to the Tuscan authorities for possessing French books, and when he began writing enthusiastic articles about the French Revolution in the Florentine *Gazzetta universal*, he came under threat of arrest so he fled to Corsica, just in time to welcome back Pasquale Paoli [the Corsican patriot who ended Genoan rule on the island] on his return from exile in England in June 1790.

"Like Rousseau before him, Buonarotti was delighted by the Corsican pattern of social organization, and he began to dream of imposing a similarly egalitarian system on the Italian mainland. In the meantime, he helped implement French revolutionary laws on the island, in the teeth of considerable opposition from the Corsicans. He later tried to foist a constitution, which turned out to be very close to Rousseau's nation-building project for Corsica, on the neighbouring island of Sardinia. But the Sardinians did not wish to become a nation. After this failure, he headed for Paris. There, he fell in love with Saint-Just and Robespierre, and at the end of 1793 he was appointed *Commissaire Éxécutif* in Corsica. On the way there he receive news that the island had been taken by the British so he decided to instead follow the French Army which was invading Piedmont. On 22 April 1794 he was named French commissioner for the captured province of Oneglia. In this tiny place, where he was joined by republicans and malcontents from every part of the peninsula, Buonarotti began to build up a pan-Italian conspiratorial network.

"He soon fell foul of local interests, and was arrested, sent back to Paris and cast into the prison of Plessis. There, Buonarotti met his soul mater, Graechus (formerly François) Babeuf. Babeuf's Corsica had been the poor villages of his native Picardy, where the peasant still operated an archaic system of strip-farming. During the five months of their imprisonment, the two worked out their political recipe, published by Babeuf at the end of 1795 as *The Plebeian Manifesto*. It was the first real communist manifesto, calling for the abolition of private property and stipulating that anyone who worked hard or tried to improve himself must be repressed as a 'social scourge'. In 1796 Babeuf began planning an insurrection in Paris, but it was the means rather than the desired ends that are the most significant. They were quite novel, and derived from Buonarotti's experiences. He rejected the widespread belief, based primarily on the American paragon, that revolutions could be carried out through spontaneous popular effort when inspired by the justice of its cause. This, Buonarotti realized, was out of the question in the Italian peninsula, where the people did not care a jot for any cause. So, if a revolution was to succeed, it would have to be implemented over their heads, and possibly even against their will, by a group of dedicated conspirators taking control of the levers of power. This they proposed to do by the gradual infiltration of the army, police and administrations.

"For his part, Buonarotti concentrated on enlisting the motley crowd of Italian patriots who had taken refuge in France, and who were to accompany the French army poised to invade the Austrian possessions in northern Italy. But only a couple of weeks later the French Directory uncovered Babeuf's conspiracy. Babeuf and one his accomplices were executed, the rest were given varying terms of imprisonment. This put an end to Buonarotti's plans. But the model he had created, which enabled small and weak cells to subvert strong governments, was to shape most of European conspiratorial activity over the next century and keep the forces of the status quo in a state of permanent panic alert. Buonarotti was the godfather of all secret societies and they would play an exceptional role in the history of Italy over the next decades."[432]

Paul Johnson writes: "Like the Comintern in the 1930s, they were a European phenomenon and, to some extent, coordinated and centrally directed. But unlike the Comintern, they did not have an ultimate national base, where they could be trained and from which money and arms could flow.

"[Buonarrotti] came out of prison in 1809 and immediately resumed underground work in northern Italy with Republican elements in the French occupation and local malcontents and 'patriots'. He founded a network called the Adelphi, which migrated to Geneva when the Austrians took over Lombardy and changed its name to the Sublime Perfect Masters.

"The Sublime Perfect Masters combined illuminism, freemasonry and radical politics with a good deal of pretentious symbolism. Its structure was hierarchical, only the most senior levels knowing its inner secrets, and Buonarrotti came closer to the isolated cell system of modern terrorist groups, which makes them so difficult to destroy, even if penetrated. The various police forces never discovered much about his apparatus, which is the reason we know so little about it. In theory it was formidable, since it had links with a Directive Committee in Paris which coordinated Orléanist, Jacobin, Bonapartist, and Republican subversion, with various German groups, such as the *Tugendbund* and the *Unbedingren*; with Spanish Masons and *communeros*; and even with a Russian group called the Union of Salvation, the whole supposedly existing under a mysterious body, also in Geneva, called the Grand Firmament. In Italy, the Sublime Perfect Masters had links with the Carbonari, which operated in the center and the south. Contact was maintained by special handshakes, secret codes, invisible ink and other devices… But it is a notable fact that Buonarrotti, in particular, and the networks, in general, never once succeeded in organizing a successful conspiracy or one which can fairly be said to have got off the ground. Moreover when uprisings did take place and governments were overthrown, as in Spain in 1820, Buonarrotti – like Marx, and indeed Lenin, later – was taken completely by surprise…"[433]

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[432] Zamoyski, *Holy Madness*, pp. 114-115.

[433] Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern, World Society 1815-1830*, London: Phoenix, 1992, pp. 665-666.

The Congress of Vienna in 1815 tried to put the clock back and restore Italy's complex patchwork of states. However, the thirst for change had been aroused, and the *Carbonari* tried to satisfy it, amassing a vast membership of between 300,000 and 642,000 people. The highest members of the *Carbonari* swore the following oath: "Property boundaries shall be erased, all possessions shall be reduced to communal wealth, and the one and only patria, most gentle of mothers, shall furnish food, education and work to the whole body of her beloved and free children. This is the redemption invoked by the wise. This is the true recreation of Jerusalem. This is the manifest and inevitable decisions of the Supreme Being."[434] They vowed to overthrow absolutism in Italy, but were opposed by Metternich's secret police.

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It was out of this milieu that there arose the most important Italian nationalist: Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872), who joined the *Carbonari*, but was betrayed to the police in 1830, arrested, and interned at Savona. There he had the idea of creating a new nationalist movement to replace the *Carbonari.*

"To him," writes M.S. Anderson, "nationality was truly a religion; national unity must be based upon religious belief and be itself a form of religious belief. The fundamental truths he thought of as known intuitively, leaving to reason only a subordinate function. The duties of men were more important than their rights; for individuals existed to fulfill a mission in the service of humanity, and liberty was no more than the ability to choose between different ways of doing this. Nations could be constituted only by the will of the individuals composing them, by those individuals recognizing a common duty and its consequences and affirming a common purpose. Each had its own specific moral mission to perform. 'Every nation has a mission, a special office in the collective work, a special aptitude with which to fulfill it: this is its sign, its legitimacy.' A world of sovereign nation-states, each fulfilling its God-given task, would therefore be one of peace and happiness. Mazzini was much more than a selfish or parochial nationalist. His ideas were always at bottom universalist. To him the idea that the nations of Europe as soon as they had gained their freedom would spontaneously unite in some form of association was fundamental; and his last significant work, the *Politica Internazionale* (1871) was a vision of a Europe of free peoples thus voluntarily associated. The national state was to him the norm towards which all political life and action should tend, not merely a panacea for specific grievances. 'The nation,' he wrote, 'is the God-appointed instrument for the welfare of the human race.'"[435]

The Austrians were bitterly and cruelly opposed to the cause of Italian nationalism. "The roll of martyrs was rapidly built up through the 1830s as a result of a string of unsuccessful conspiracies and risings, each giving forth its crop of victims. At a distance, they appear ludicrous, and sometimes outright comic, but the blundering brutality of the existing regimes sanctified them by ensuring that they had tragic conclusions. And that was in line with Mazzini's aims. 'Ideas ripen quickly when nourished by the blood of martyrs,' he pointed out."[436]

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[434] Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 547.

[435] Anderson, *The Ascendancy of Europe, 1815-1914,* London: Longman, 1985, pp. 210-211.

Mazzini, writes Evans, "believed in a United States of Europe, composed of free and independent peoples in a voluntary association with each other. The disunity of the 1831 urban insurrections in northern Italy and their easy suppression by the Austrians convinced him that the *carbonari*, to which he belonged, had to be replaced by a truly national organization, dedicated above all to organizing the expulsion of the Austrians from the peninsula. Living secretly in Marseille, he founded an association called Young Italy, possibly in imitation of the literary movement Young Germany founded shortly before. Despite its conspiratorial trappings, Young Italy had a clear programme – Italian unification on a democratic and republican basis. It also compiled membership lists, charged subscriptions, and employed a courier service to keep members in various towns and cities in touch with one another. Soon the members of Young Italy numbered thousands, inspired by Mazzini's tireless campaigning, his incessant pamphleteering, and the fact that he was apparently the 'most beautiful being, male or female' that people who encountered him said they had ever seen. Metternich declared membership punishable by death. Carlo Alberto, the King of Piedmont-Sardinia, had twelve army officers who were involved in a plot to stage a military uprising under Mazzini's influence early in 1833 publicly executed. Mazzini himself was condemned to death *in absentia* and the sentence read out in front of his family house in Genoa. Metternich succeeded in getting him expelled from France, but Mazzini continued to run Young Italy from Switzerland. He now focused his numerous plots on Piedmont: one of them, like so many betrayed by the Piedmontese authorities, involved a young naval officer, Giuseppe Garibaldi, who had joined Young Italy after meeting a member on a trading expedition to the Black Sea. Also condemned to death *in absentia*, Garibaldi fled to South America, where he took part in the 'War of the Ragamuffins' in Brazil before fighting in the Uruguayan Civil War.

"Working through correspondence, conducted after 1837 from London, Mazzini created individual national movements under the aegis of Young Italy, Young Austria, Young Bohemia, Young Ukraine, Young Tyrol and even Young Argentina came briefly into being. Young Poland played a significant role in the 1830 uprising. The most enduring and important organization of this kind was Young Ireland, a term mockingly attached by the English Press to a movement founded in 1840 by Daniel O'Connell (1775-1847); it had nothing to do with Mazzini, who did not think that Ireland should be independent; it eschewed violence and insurrection, and it dedicated itself not to the creation of a new nation but to the repeal of the Act of Union with England passed in 1800. But through the organization he actually did found, Mazzini had changed the terms and tactics of nationalism. Nationalists had learned to co-ordinate their efforts within each particular country, and a strong dose of realism had entered their discourse, causing all but the Poles to recognize their insurrections were unlikely to succeed by themselves, and that the formation of secret societies was not leading anywhere: nationalists needed a programme and a formal organization, equipped with a propaganda apparatus and aimed at securing democratic support.

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[436] Zamoyski, *Holy Madness,* p. 291.

"Under the leadership of Metternich, the Habsburg Empire continued indeed to be the major obstacle that lay in the path of nationalist movements – in Italy, Bohemia, Germany, Hungary and – along with Russian and Prussia – in Poland… The Emperor Franz I refused to introduce any new constitutional arrangements to his domains in northern Italy. 'My Empire,' he remarked, ' resembles a ramshackle house. If one wishes to demolish a bit of it one does not know how much will collapse.' In central Italy, Gregory XVI, who was elected in 1831, ruled the Papal States through a militia of 'centurions' who suppressed all criticism of the corruption and inefficiency of his administration. So chaotic was the state of affairs in his dominions that the papal government did not even manage to prepare a state budget for the last ten years of his pontificate. In Piedmont-Sardinia throughout the 1830s and the first half or more of the 1840s, the fear of conspiracy and revolution kept Carlo Alberto of Piedmont on the Austrians' side in northern Italy. Yet he was pessimistic in the longer run. 'The great crisis,' he wrote in 1834, 'can only be more or less delayed, but it will undoubtedly arrive.'

"Avoiding it was one of the aims of the moderate liberal reformers who arrived on the political scene in the 1840s. As with similar figures elsewhere in Europe, they looked above all to Britain as an example. The Milanese reformer Carlo Cattaneo (1801-69), an ex-*carbonaro* who had turned to more moderate ways, thought that 'peoples should act as a permanent mirror to each other, because the interests of civilization are mutually dependent and common'. In Piedmont, the most influential of the moderates in the long run was Camillo Benso, Count of Cavour (1810-61), a Protestant who had travelled widely in Britain and France and supported economic progress, railway-building and the separation of Church and State. As liberal sentiment spread among the educated classes, above all in northern Italy, the British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston warned the Austrian ambassador in London that it was time to make concessions: 'We think ourselves conservative in preaching and advising everywhere concessions, reforms, and improvements, where public opinion demands them; you on the contrary refuse them.' But change in Italy seemed to be heralded by the election of Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti (1792-1878) as Pope Pius IX on 16 June 1846. The new Supreme Pontiff amnestied political prisoners, relaxed the censorship rules, and appointed commissions to improve the Papal States' administration, laws, and educational provision. His summoning of a consultative assembly sent shock waves through the Italian states. Others followed suit. In Tuscany censorship was partially abolished in May 1847, a legislature was convened following demonstrations in a number of cities, and in September the Grand Duke Leopold II (1797-1870) appointed a moderate liberal government. In Piedmont, Carlo Alberto granted elected communal councils and limitations on censorship in October 1847. In the Habsburg Monarchy, Metternich's refusal to relax the censorship rules in 1845 had no effect since nationalist and liberal literature poured in from outside, including French, English and German newspapers. The crisis seemed to be coming. 'We are now,' warned the former civil servant Viktor Baron von Andrian-Werburg (1813-58), author of an influential, pessimistic book on the future of the multinational monarchy, 'where France was in 1788.'"[437]

Mazzini's nationalism invoked the name of God and was *universalist*; that is, it believed in the nationalist cause in *every* nation, each such cause being of equal value. As he declared: "I believe in the immense voice of God which the centuries transmit to me through the universal tradition of Humanity; and it tells me that the Family, the Nation and Humanity are the three spheres within which the human *individual* has to labour for a common *end,* for the moral perfecting of himself and of others, or rather of himself through others and for others."[438]

Such "universalist nationalism" was possible in the first half of the 19th century, when nationalism was still closely integrated with the romantic reaction against the destructive, anti-traditional Enlightenment programme, when thinkers were trying to combine universalism with local traditions and the sacredness of the individual. "In practice, however," writes Anderson, "it was inevitable that the idea of national mission should normally be put forward in support of the demands and grievances of some specific national group."[439] And so as the century progressed, and as the nationalism of one country became opposed to that of another, universalist nationalism became rarer. Religious idealism gradually gave way to a more hard-edged, atheistic cynicism.

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[437] Evans, op. cit., pp. 178-181.

[438] Mazzini, in Biddiss, "Nationalism and the Moulding of Modern Europe", *History*, 79, N 257, October, 1984, p. 420.

[439] Anderson, op. cit., p. 211.

32. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (3) ISRAEL

The French revolutionary and nationalist spirit dominated the nineteenth century, spreading even to the European colonies in Central and South America. This spirit unleashed by the French revolution was never put back in the bottle. From now on, the whole world would have to struggle against its spirit-children – a struggle that is by no means over at the present time.

Among the nationalisms ignited by the French revolution perhaps the most important in the long term, and the one that owed least to the spirit of European nationalism, being having its roots in early antiquity, was that of the Jews…

"Before the great secularization in Europe," writes Shlomo Sand, "Jewish believers clung to the religious axiom that sustained them through times of trouble: they were the 'chosen people', God's sacred congregation, destined to 'illuminate the nations'. In reality, they knew that as minority groups existing in the shadow of other religions, they were subordinated to the stronger powers. The passion for proselytizing that had characterized these communities in the past had all but disappeared through the ages, largely from fear of the dominant religions. Over the centuries, thick layers of distrust and fear of propagating their faith padded the self-identification of the believers and bolstered the communal isolation that eventually became their distinguishing mark. In the Middle Ages, the exclusive belief in the 'unique nation that dwells apart' also served to prevent large-scale desertion to the other monotheistic religions."[440]

The eighteenth century had already witnessed some important changes in the relationship between the State and Jewry. In England, the Jews had achieved emancipation *de facto*, if not *de jure*. This was helped by the relatively small number of Jews in Britain, and the non-ideological approach of the British government.

In 1776 all Portuguese Jews had been given religious liberty and the permission to inhabit all parts of the kingdom.

In 1782 the Austrian Emperor Joseph II published his *Toleranzpatent*, whose purpose was that "all Our subjects without distinction of nationality and religion, once they have been admitted and tolerated in our States, shall participate in common in public welfare,… shall enjoy legal freedom, and encounter no obstacles to any honest way of gaining their livelihood and of increasing general industriousness… Existing laws pertaining to the Jewish nation… are not always compatible with these Our most gracious intentions."

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[440] Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People,* London: Verso, 2009, p. 250.

Most restrictions on the Jews were removed, but these new freedoms applied only to the "privileged Jew" – that is, the Jew whom the State found "useful" in some way – and not to the "foreign Jew". Moreover, even privileged Jews were not granted the right of full citizenship and craft mastership.[441] For Joseph wanted to grant *tolerance* to the Jews, but not full *equality*.

Something similar took place in Prussia, where the Enlightenment and its universalist ideas began to draw together Jewish and Gentile intellectuals. Christopher Clark writes: "The Jewish Enlightenment or Haskalah (from the Hebrew word *le-haskil*, 'enlighten, clarify with the aid of the intellect') first took hold in Berlin, the only court city in the German lands where Jewish residents were not confined to a ghetto. One of its earliest and most emblematic exponents was the philosopher Moses Mendelssohn, who lived and worked in the city from 1743 until his death in 1786"[442], and created with his many Gentile friends, such as the dramatist Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, "Prussia's Jewish Enlightenment".

But the first major breach in the Jewish ghetto walls was made, not in Berlin, but in France, by the French revolutionaries. Pouring through that breach, the Jews burst into the forefront of world politics for the first time since the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

In 1789 there were 39,000 Jews in France. Most of them (half according to one estimate, nine-tenths according to another[443]) were Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazim living in Alsace and Lorraine, which France had acquired under the terms of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648. In south-west France and papal Avignon, however, the Jewish population was Sephardic. They were considered more assimilated thatn their Ashkenazi brethren in Alsace, and so, already, in 1784, the Jews of Bordeaux had been accorded concessions by Louis XVI. On January 28, 1790, they were given the rights of French citizens. The Ashkenazi Jews of Alsace were given full citizenship a little later, in July, 1790. However, "the proposal to extend this privilege [given to the Bourdeaux Jews] to the Jews of Alsace evoked a storm of controversy in the Assembly and also violent insurrections amongst the Alsace peasants."[444]

"It is important," writes Nesta Webster, "to distinguish between these two races of Jews [the Ashkenazi and the Sephardim] in discussing the question of Jewish emancipation at the time of the Revolution. For whilst the Sephardim had shown themselves good citizens and were therefore subject to no persecutions, the Ashkenazim by their extortionate usury and oppressions had made themselves detested by the people, so that rigorous laws were enforced to restrain their rapacity. The discussions that raged in the National Assembly on the subject of the Jewish question related therefore mainly to the Jews of Alsace."[445]

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[441] David Vital, *A People Apart*, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 35-36.

[442] Clark, *Iron Kingdom. The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600=1947,* London: Penguin, 2008, pp. 257, 260.

[443] Doyle, op. cit., p. 411.

[444] Webster, op. cit., p. 247.

In their first debate on the subject, on September 28, 1789, they made a further important distinction between the nation and the individuals constituting the nation. Thus Stanislas Comte de Clermont-Tonnerre argued that "there cannot be a nation within a nation", so "the Jews should be denied everything as a nation but granted everything as individuals."[446] A separate *nation* of the Jews could not be allowed to exist within France. For "virtually all – moderates no less than radicals, Dantonists no less than Robespierrists, Christians as well as deists, pantheists, and atheists – held that equality of status in the state they were in their various ways intent on establishing was bound up of necessity with the elimination of all groups, classes, or corporations intermediate (and therefore mediating) between the state itself and the citizen."[447]

Vital writes: "The immediate issue before the Assembly was the admission of certain semi-pariah classes – among them actors and public executioners – to what came to be termed 'active citizenship'. It was soon apparent, however, that the issues presented by the Jews were very different. It was apparent, too, that it would make no better sense to examine the Jews' case in tandem with that of the Protestants. The latter, like the Jews, were non-Catholics, but their *national* identity was not in doubt, nor, therefore, their right to the new liberties being decreed for all. Whatever else they were, they were Frenchmen. No one in the National Assembly thought otherwise. But were the Jews Frenchmen? If they were not, could they become citizens? The contention of the lead speaker in the debate, Count Stanislaw de Clermont-Tonnerre, was that the argument for granting them full rights of citizenship needed to be founded on the most general principles. Religion was a private affair. The law of the state need not and ought not to impinge upon it. So long as religious obligations were compatible with the law of the state and contravened it in no particular it was wrong to deprive a person, whose conscience required him to assume such religious obligations, of those rights which it was the duty of all citizens qua citizens to assume. One either imposed a national religion by main force, so erasing the relevant clause of the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen to which all now subscribed. Or else one allowed everyone the freedom to profess the religious opinion of his choice. Mere *tolerance* was unacceptable. 'The system of tolerance, coupled.. to degrading distinctions, is so vicious in itself, that he who is compelled to tolerate remains as dissatisfied with the law as is he whom it has granted no more than such a form of tolerance.' There was no middle way. The enemies of the Jews attacked them, and attacked him, Clermont-Tonnerre, on the grounds that they were deficient morally. It was also held of the Jews that they were unsociable, that their laws prescribed usury, that they were forbidden to mix with the French by marriage or at table or join them in defence of the country or in any other common enterprise. But these reproaches were either unjust or specious. Usury was blameworthy beyond a doubt, but it was the laws of France that had compelled the Jews to practise it. And so with most of the other charges. Once the Jews had title to land and a country of their own the practice of usury would cease. So would the unsociability that was held against them. So would much of their religious eccentricity [*ces travers religieux*]. As for the further argument, that they had judges and laws of their own, why so they did, and on this matter he, Clermont-Tonnerre, would say to his critics (coming to the passage in his address to the Assembly that would be quoted over and over again in the course of the two centuries that followed), that that indeed was impermissible.

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[445] Webster, op. cit., p. 247.

[446] Paul Johnson, *A History of the Jews*, London: Phoenix, 1987, 1995, p. 306.

[447] Vital, op. cit., p. 49.

"'As a nation the Jews must be denied everything, as individuals they must be granted everything; their judges can no longer be recognized; their recourse must be to our own exclusively; legal protection for the doubtful laws by which Jewish corporate existence is maintained must end; they cannot be allowed to create a political body or a separate order within the state; it is necessary that they be citizens individually.'

"There remained the question, what if, as some argued, it was the case that the Jews themselves had no interest in citizenship? Why in that case, he went on, 'if they do not want it, let them say so, in which case expel them [*s'ils veulent ne l'être pas, qu'ils le disent, et alors, qu'on les bannisse*]'. The idea of a society of non-citizens within the state and a nation within a nation was repugnant to him. But in fact, the speaker concluded, that was not at all what the Jews wanted. The evidence was to the contrary. They wished to be incorporated into the nation of France.

"Clermont-Tonnerre was promptly contradicted on this last, vital point by the abbé Maury. The term 'Jew', said the abbé did not denote a religious sect, but a nation, one which had laws which it had always followed and by which it wished to continue to abide. 'To proclaim the Jews citizens would be as if to say that, without letters of naturalization and without ceasing to be English or Danish, Englishmen and Danes could become Frenchmen.' But Maury's chief argument was of a moral and social order. The Jews were inherently undesirable, socially as well as economically. They had been chased out of France, and then recalled, no less than seven times – chased out by avarice, as Voltaire had rightly put it, readmitted by avarice once more, but in foolishness as well.

"'The Jews have passed seventeen centuries without mingling with the other nations. They have never engaged in anything but trade in money; they have been the plague of the agricultural provinces; not one of them has ever dignified [*su ennoblir*] his hands by driving a plough. Their laws leave them no time for agriculture; the Sabbath apart, they celebrate fifty-six more festivals than the Christians in each year. In Poland they possess an entire province. Well, then! While the sweat of Christian slaves waters the furrows in which the Jews' opulence germinates they themselves, as their fields are cultivated, engage in weighing their ducats and calculating how much they can shave off the coinage without exposing themselves to legal penalties.'

"They have never been labourers, Maury continued, not even under David and Solomon. And even then they were notorious for their laziness. Their sole concern was commerce. Would you make soldiers of them, the abbé asked. If you did, you would derive small benefit from them: they have a horror of celibacy and they marry young. He knew of no general who would wish to command an army of Jews either on the Sabbath – a day on which they never gave battle – or indeed at any other time. Or did the Assembly imagine that they could make craftsmen of them when their many festivals and sabbath days presented an insurmountable obstacle to such an enterprise. The Jews held 12 million mortgages in Alsace alone, he informed his colleagues. Within a month of their being granted citizenship they would own half the province outright. In ten years' time they would have 'conquered' all of it, reducing it to nothing more than a Jewish colony – upon which the hatred the people of Alsace already bore for the Jews would explode.

"It was not that he, Maury, wished the Jews to be persecuted. 'They are men, they are our brothers; anathema on whoever speaks of intolerance!' Nor need their religious opinions disturb anyone [!!!]. He joined all others in agreeing that they were to be protected. But that did not mean that they could be citizens. It was as individuals that they were entitled to protection, not as Frenchmen.

"Robespierre took the opposite line, supporting Clermont-Tonnerre. All who fulfilled the generally applicable conditions of eligibility to citizenship were entitled to the rights that derived from it, he argued, including the right to hold public office. And so far as the facts were concerned, much of what Maury had said about the Jews was 'infinitely exaggerated' and contrary to known history. Moreover, to charge the Jews themselves with responsibility for their own persecution at the hands of others, was absurd.

"'Vices are imputed to them... But to whom should these vices be imputed if not to ourselves for our injustice?... Let us restore them to happiness, to country [*patrie*], and to virtue by restoring them to the dignity of men and citizens; let us reflect that it can never be politic, whatever anyone might say, to condemn a multitude of men who live among us to degradation and oppression.'"[448]

Thus spoke the man who was soon to lead the most degrading and oppressive régime in European history to that date. Indeed, it is striking how those who spoke most fervently for the Jews – apart from leaders of the Jewish community such as the banker Cerfbeer and Isaac Beer – were Freemasons or *Illuminati*. Thus in the two years before the crucial debate on September 27, 1791, writes Nechvolodov, "fourteen attempts were made to give the Jews civic equality and thirty-five major speeches were given by several orators, among them Mirabeau, Robespierre, Abbé Grégoire, Abbé Sièyes, Camille, Desmoulins, Vernier, Barnave, Lameth, Duport and others.

"'Now there is a singular comparison to be made,' says Abbé Lemann, '- all the names which we have just cited and which figure in the *Moniteur* as having voted for the Jews are also found on the list of Masons... Is this coincidence not proof of the order given, in the lodges of Paris, to work in favour of Jewish emancipation?'

"And yet, in spite of the revolutionary spirit, the National Assembly was very little inclined to give equality of civil rights to the Jews. Against this reform there rose up all the deputies from Alsace, since it was in Alsace that the majority of the French Jews of that time lived....

"But this opposition in the National Assembly did not stop the Jews. To attain their end, they employed absolutely every means.

"According to Abbé Lemann, these means were the following:

"First means: entreaty. A charm exercised over several presidents of the Assembly. Second: the influence of gold. Third means: logic. After the National Assembly had declared the 'rights of man', the Jews insisted that these rights should logically be applied to them, and they set out their ideas on this subject with an 'implacable arrogance'.

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[448] Vital, op. cit., pp. 43-45.

"Fourth means: recourse to the suburbs and the Paris Commune, so as to force the National Assembly under 'threat of violence' to give the Jews equality.

"'One of their most thorough historians (Graetz),' says Abbé Lemann, 'did not feel that he had to hide this manoeuvre. Exhausted, he says, by the thousand useless efforts they had made to obtain civil rights, they thought up a last means. Seeing that it was impossible to obtain by reason and common sense what they called their rights, they resolved to force the National Assembly to approve of their emancipation.

"'To this end, naturally, were expended vast sums, which served to establish the 'Christian Front' which they wanted.

"'In the session of the National Assembly of January 18, 1791, the Duke de Broglie expressed himself completely openly on this subject: 'Among them,' he said, 'there is one in particular who has acquired an immense fortune at the expense of the State, and who is spending in the town of Paris considerable sums to win supporters of his cause.' He meant Cerfbeer.

"At the head of the Christian Front created on this occasion were the lawyer Godard and three ecclesiastics: the Abbés Mulot, Bertoliot and Fauchet.

"Abbé Fauchet was a well-known *illuminatus*, and Abbé Mulot – the president of the all-powerful Paris Commune, with the help of which the Jacobins exerted, at the time desired, the necessary pressure on the National and Legislative Assemblies, and later on the Convention.

"What Gregory, curé of Embermeuil, was for the Jews in the heart of the National Assembly, Abbé Mulot was in the heart of the Commune.

"However, although they were fanatical Jacobins, the members of the Commune were far from agreeing to the propositions of their president that they act in defence of Jewish rights in the National Assembly. It was necessary to return constantly to the attack, naturally with the powerful help of Cerfbeer's gold and that of the Abbés Fauchet and Bertoliot. This latter declared during a session of the Commune on this question: 'It was necessary that such a happy and unexpected event as the revolution should come and rejuvenate France... Let us hasten to consign to oblivion the crimes of our fathers.'

"Then, during another session, the lawyer Godard burst into the chamber with fifty armed 'patriots' dressed in costumes of the national guard with three-coloured cockades. They were fifty Jews who, naturally provided with money, had made the rounds of the sections of the Paris Commune and of the wards of the town of Paris, talking about recruiting partisans of equality for the Jews. This had its effect. Out of the sixty sections of Paris fifty-nine declared themselves for equality (only the quartier des Halles abstained). Then the Commune addressed the National Assembly with an appeal signed by the Abbés Mulot, Bertoliot, Fauchet and other members, demanding that equality be immediately given to the Jews.

"However, even after that, the National Assembly hesitated in declaring itself in the manner provided. Then, on September 27, the day of the penultimate session of the Assembly before its dissolution, the Jacobin deputy Adrien Duport posed the question of equality for the Jews in a categorical fashion. The Assembly knew Adrien Duport's personality perfectly. It knew that in a secret meeting of the chiefs of Freemasonry which preceded the revolution, he had insisted on the necessity of resort to a system of terror. The Assembly yielded. There followed a decree signed by Louis XVI granting French Jews full and complete equality of rights… "[449]

The power of the Jewish minority was revealed especially during the reign of terror under Robespierre, when 2300 Catholic churches were converted into "temples of Reason".

At that point some voices were raised, writes Tikhomirov, "demanding that the ban be spread onto the Jews also, and that circumcision be forbidden. These demands were completely ignored, and were not even put to the vote. In the local communes individual groups of especially wild Jacobins, who had not been initiated into higher politics, sometimes broke into synagogues, destroying the Torah and books, but it was only by 1794 that the revolutionary-atheist logic finally forced even the bosses to pose the question of the annihilation not only of Catholicism, but also of Jewry. At this point, however, the Jews were delivered by 9 Thermidor, 1794. Robespierre fell and was executed. The moderate elements triumphed. The question of the ban of Jewry disappeared of itself, while the Constitution of Year III of the Republic granted *equal rights* to the Jews."[450]

But this was not the end of the matter. In the late 1790s a new wave of Ashkenazis entered France from Germany, attracted by the superior status their French brothers now enjoyed. This was to lead to further disturbances in Alsace, which it was left to Napoleon to deal with…

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[449] General A. Nechvolodov, *L'Empéreur Nicolas II et les Juifs (Emperor Nicholas II and the Jews)*, Paris, 1924, pp. 216-220.
[450] Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 365.

"Nevertheless," as Paul Johnson writes, "the deed was done. French Jews were now free and the clock could never be turned back. Moreover, emancipation in some form took place wherever the French were able to carry the revolutionary spirit with their arms. The ghettos and Jewish closed quarters were broken into in papal Avignon (1791), Nice (1792) and the Rhineland (1792-3). The spread of the revolution to the Netherlands, and the founding of the Batavian republic, led to Jews being granted full and formal rights by law there (1796). In 1796-8 Napoleon Bonaparte liberated many of the Italian ghettos, French troops, young Jews and local enthusiasts tearing down the crumbling old walls.

"For the first time a new archetype, which had always existed in embryonic form, began to emerge from the shadows: the revolutionary Jew. Clericalists in Italy swore enmity to 'Gauls, Jacobins and Jews'. In 1793-4 Jewish Jacobins set up a revolutionary regime in Saint Esprit, the Jewish suburb of Bayonne. Once again, as during the Reformation, traditionalists saw a sinister link between the Torah and subversion."[451]

However, the above picture of the Jewish struggle for emancipation in Paris and, later, Bayonne should not obscure the fact that there was still very strong opposition to the idea of emancipation from within Jewry itself led especially by the rabbinic leaders of Ashkenazi Jewry in Poland. Thus Zalkind Hourwitz was a Polish Jew who won a prize for an essay advocating Jewish emancipation from the Royal Society for Arts and Sciences at Metz in 1787. Nevertheless, as Vital writes, he "made no bones about his view of the internal constraints to which Jews in all parts were subject through the workings of the rabbinical-Talmudic system: of the limits it set upon their worldly freedom, of the manner in which it effectively barred their entry into society on a basis of equality. The social liberation of the Jews was conditional, he believed, on the power that the rabbis and the *parnassim* [chief synagogue officials] jointly exercised over ordinary people in their daily lives being terminated – in great matters as in small. 'Their rabbis and syndics must be strictly forbidden to assume the least authority over their fellows outside the synagogue, or refuse honours to those who have shaved off their beards, or curled their hair, or who dress like Christians, go to the theatre, or observe other customs that bear no actual relation to their religion, but derive from superstition alone as a means of distinguishing them from other peoples.'"[452]

In France, it had been the socially marginalized Jews who had pressed for emancipation. Even the more acculturated Sephardic Jews of Bourdeaux had been slow to ask for it, first, because they feared that they might have to pay for liberties which they already enjoyed *de*

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[451] Johnson, op. cit., pp. 306-307.

[452] Vital, op. cit., p. 101.

facto, and secondly, because they wanted to be clearly delineated from the Ashkenazi Jews of Alsace. The latter, writes Vital, "had been slower still to ask for liberation. There is no evidence of their authorized representatives pressing for anything remotely of the kind before the Revolution; and when they made their own first approach to the new National Assembly it was to ask for no more than an end to the special taxes laid upon them and the abolition of the residential, and travel restrictions to which they were subject. The greatest anxiety of the Alsatians was to retain their own internal communal autonomy – to which end, with only rare exceptions, they (at all events, their authorized representatives) were prepared to forgo emancipation altogether. Only when they learned that other branches of French Jewry, the small community in Paris among them, were prepared to yield to the demand that they give up their ancient corporate status did the Alsatians and Lorrainers fall, reluctantly, into line."[453]

The question: to emancipate or not to emancipate? was to cause bitter divisions in Jewry that have continued to the present day. It brought into sharp focus another question: was it *possible* for the Jews, while remaining Jewish, ever to become an integral part of non-Jewish society? And if not, how were they to live – as a separate nation with its own homeland and language as the other Gentile nations, or in some other way? The extreme zeal of the champions of Jewish emancipation, on the one hand, and the equally extreme ghetto-creating mentality of the opponents of emancipation, on the other, suggested that there was no easy solution to this problem, even with the best intentions of the Gentile and/or Christian rulers. For, as Norman Davies points out, "Jewish emancipation was a double-edged operation. It required a fundamental change in the conduct and the attitudes both of the host societies and of the Jews themselves. It demanded the dismantling not only of the constraints imposed on Jews from outside but also of the 'internal ghetto' in Jewish minds. Modern concern with the roots of anti-Semitism sometimes overlooks the severity of the Jews' own laws of segregation. Observant Jews could not hold to the 613 rules of dress, diet, hygiene and worship if they tried to live outside their own closed community; and intermarriage was strictly forbidden. Since Judaic law taught that Jewishness was biologically inherited in the maternal line, Jewish women were jealously protected. A girl who dared to marry out could expect to be disowned by her family, and ritually pronounced dead. Extreme determination was needed to withstand such acute social pressures…"[454]

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[453] Vital, op. cit., p. 103.

[454] Davies, *Europe: A History,* London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 843.

If the French revolution gave the Jews their first political victory, Napoleon gave them their second. On May 22, 1799, the Paris *Moniteur* published the following report from Constantinople on April 17: "Buonaparte has published a proclamation in which he invites all the Jews of Asia and Africa to come and place themselves under his flag *in order to re-establish ancient Jerusalem*. He has already armed a great number and their battalions are threatening Aleppo."

This was not the first time that the Jews had persuaded a Gentile ruler to restore them to Jerusalem. The Roman Emperor Julian the Apostate had allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem and start rebuilding the Temple. However, fire came out from the foundations and black crosses appeared on the workers' garments, forcing them to abandon the enterprise.[455] And the Jews were to be thwarted again now: British sea-power prevented Napoleon from reaching Jerusalem and making himself, as was reported to be his intention, king of the Jews. The Jews would have to wait until 1917 before another Gentile power (the British this time) again offered them a return to Zion.

Napoleon now learned what many rulers before and after learned: that kindness towards the Jews does not make them more tractable. General Nechvolodov writes: "Since the first years of the Empire, Napoleon I had become very worried about the Jewish monopoly in France and the isolation in which they lived in the midst of the other citizens, although they had received citizenship. The reports of the departments showed the activity of the Jews in a very bad light: 'Everywhere there are false declarations to the civil authorities; fathers declare the sons who are born to them to be daughters... Again, there are Jews who have given an example of disobedience to the laws of conscription; out of sixty-nine Jews who, in the course of six years, should have formed part of the Moselle contingent, none has entered the army.'

"By contrast, behind the army, they give themselves up to frenzied speculation.

"'Unfortunately,' says Thiers describing the entry of the French into Rome in his *History of the Revolution*, 'the excesses, not against persons but against property, marred the entry of the French into the ancient capital of the world... Berthier had just left for Paris, Massena had just succeeded him. This hero was accused of having given the first example. He was soon imitated. They began to pillage the palaces, convents and rich collections. Some Jews in the rear of the army bought for a paltry price the magnificent objects which the looters were offering them.'

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[455] Socrates, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 20; Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History*, V, 22; Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, 15; Karen Armstrong, *A History of Jerusalem*, London: HarperCollins, 1997, pp. 194-196.

"It was in 1805, during Napoleon's passage through Strasbourg, after the victory of Austerlitz, that the complaints against the Jews assumed great proportions. The principal accusations brought against them concerned the terrible use they made of usury. As soon as he returned to Paris, Napoleon judged it necessary to concentrate all his attention on the Jews. In the State Council, during its session of April 30, he said, among other things, the following on this subject:

"'The French government cannot look on with indifference as a vile, degraded nation capable of every iniquity takes exclusive possession of two beautiful departments of Alsace; one must consider the Jews as a nation and not as a sect. It is a nation within a nation; I would deprive them, at least for a certain time, of the right to take out mortgages, for it is too humiliating for the French nation to find itself at the mercy of the vilest nation. Some entire villages have been expropriated by the Jews; they have replaced feudalism. It would be dangerous to let the keys of France, Strasbourg and Alsace, fall into the hands of a population of spies who are not at all attached to the country.'"[456]

Napoleon eventually decided on an extraordinary measure: to convene a 111-strong Assembly of Jewish Notables in order to receive clear and unambiguous answers to the following questions: did the Jewish law permit mixed marriages; did the Jews regard Frenchmen as foreigners or as brothers; did they regard France as their native country, the laws of which they were bound to obey; did the Judaic law draw any distinction between Jewish and Christian debtors? At the same time, writes Johnson, Napoleon "supplemented this secular body by convening a parallel meeting of rabbis and learned laymen, to advise the Assembly on technical points of Torah and halakhah. The response of the more traditional elements of Judaism was poor. They did not recognize Napoleon's right to invent such a tribunal, let alone summon it."[457]

However, if some traditionalists objected, other Jews received the news with unbounded joy. "According to Abbé Lemann," writes Nechvolodov, "they grovelled in front of him and were ready to recognize him as the Messiah. The sessions of the Sanhedrin [composed of 46 rabbis and 25 laymen from all parts of Western Europe] took place in February and March, 1807, and the *Decision of the Great Sanhedrin* began with the words: 'Blessed forever is the Lord, the God of Israel, Who has placed on the throne of France and of the kingdom of Italy a prince according to His heart. God has seen the humiliation of the descendants of ancient Jacob, and He has chosen Napoleon the Great to be the instrument of His mercy& Reunited today under his powerful protection in the good town of Paris, to the number of seventy-one doctors of the law and notables of Israel, we constitute a Great Sanhedrin, so as to find in us a means and power to create religious ordinances in conformity with the principles of our holy laws, and which may serve as a rule and example to all Israelites. These ordinances will teach the nations that our dogmas are consistent with the civil laws under which we live, an do not separate us at all from the society of men.'"[458]

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[456] Nechvolodov, op. cit., pp. 221-222.

[457] Johnson, op. cit., p. 310.

"The Jewish delegates," writes Oleg Platonov, "declared that state laws had the same obligatory force for Jews, that every honourable study of Jewish teaching was allowed, but usury was forbidden, etc. [However,] to the question concerning mixed marriages of Jews and Christians they gave an evasive, if not negative reply. 'Although mixed marriages between Jews and Christians cannot be clothed in a religious form, they nevertheless do not draw upon them any anathema."[459]

On the face of it, the convening of the Sanhedrin was a great triumph for Napoleon, who could now treat Jewry as just another religious denomination, and not a separate nation, "appropriating for the state what had traditionally been a subversive institution".[460] However, the Jews did not restrain their money-lending and speculative activities, as Napoleon had pleaded with them. On the contrary, only one year after the convening of the Great Sanhedrin, when it became evident that their financial excesses were continuing, Napoleon was forced to adopt repressive measures against them. Moreover, he created rabbinic consistories in France having disciplinary powers over Jews and granted rabbis the status of state officials - a measure that was strengthen the powers of the rabbis over their people. In time Jewish consistories on the French model were created all over Europe. Then, writes Platonov, "began the stormy propaganda of Judaism amidst Jews who had partially fallen away from the religion of their ancestors, organised rabbinic schools and spiritual seminaries for the education of youth in the spirit of Talmudic Judaism. Everywhere local and general union (brotherhoods) were created to united the Jews in their struggle for their national interests. In the middle of the 19th century the formerly secret tip of the Jewish iceberg came out from the shadows and began to elevate itself openly over the Christian world. In 1860 was created *L'Alliance Israélite Universelle*, whose leader, A. Crémier, almost openly formulated the criminal aims of the Hews. "We,' declared Crémier, 'do not have fellow citizens, but only religious followers. Our nationality is the religion of our fathers, we do not recognize any other nationality... The faith of our ancestors is our only patriotism. We live in foreign lands, but, in spite of all our external nationalities, we remain and will remain Jews, one single nation... The Israelites, although you are scattered to all corners of the earthly globe, remain always members of the chosen people!... Only Judaism represents the religious and political truth!'"[461]

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[458] Nechvolodov, op. cit., pp. 225-226.

[459] O.A. Platonov, *Ternovij Venets Rossii (Russia's Crown of Thorns)*, Moscow: Rodnik, 1998, p. 266.

[460] Eliane Glaser, "Napoleon's Jews: A Law unto Themselves", *BBC History Magazine*, vol. 8, no. 8, August, 2007, p. 36. This did not mean, however, that the complaints of the citizens of Alsace were ignored. According to the "infamous decree" March 17, 1808, writes Vital, "existing debts to Jews [in Alsace] were to be heavily and arbitrarily reduced. But the stipulations of the decree went a great deal further. Restrictions were to be levelled on the freedom of Jews to engage in a trade of their choice and to move from one part of the country to another without special permission. They were to submit to special commercial registration. They were not to employ the Hebrew language in their commercial transactions. Unlike all other citizens, they were to be forbidden to offer substitutes in case of conscription for military service. And the entry of foreign Jews into France was to be conditional either on military performance or on satisfaction of specified property qualifications." (op. cit., p. 59). The decree lasted for ten years, but was not then renewed by the Restoration government.

Moreover, as Tikhomirov points out, "no laws could avert the international links of the Jews. Sometimes they even appeared openly, as in *Kol Ispoel Khaberim (Alliance Israélite Universelle*), although many legislatures forbad societies and unions of their own citizens to have links with foreigners. The Jews gained a position of exceptional privilege. For the first time in the history of the diaspora they acquired greater rights than the local citizens of the countries of the dispersion. One can understand that, whatever the further aims for the resurrection of Israel might be, the countries of the new culture and statehood became from that time a lever of support for Jewry."[462]

Indeed, the main result of the Great Sanhedrin, writes Nechvolodov, "was to unite Judaism still more. "'Let us not forget from where we draw our origin,' said Rabbi Salomon Lippmann Cerfbeer on July 26, 1808, in his speech for the opening of the preparatory assembly of the Sanhedrin:- 'Let it no longer be a question of "German" or "Portuguese" Jews; although disseminated over the surface of the globe, we everywhere form only one unique people.'"[463]

After the fall of Napoleon in 1815, the Congress of Vienna decreed that "it was incumbent on the members of the German Confederation to consider an 'amelioration' of the civil status of all those who 'confessed the Jewish faith in Germany.'" Gradually, though not without opposition, Jewish emancipation spread throughout Europe…

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[461] Platonov, op. cit., pp. 267-268.

[462] Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 366.

[463] Nechvolodov, op. cit., p. 226.

33. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (4) LATIN AMERICA

"The wars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century," writes Evans, "had been not merely European but global in scale. They had shattered existing global empires and paved the way for a new relationship between Europe and the rest of the world. British rule in much of North America had already been destroyed in the American War of Independence. In their turn, however, the British had broken what remained of French power in Canada and India, and had taken over Dutch and Spanish colonies in the Caribbean as well as annexing Mauritius, the Cape of Good Hope, Singapore and Ceylon. Republican movements, inspired by the French Revolution and backed by the British, sprang up all over Latin America. Their leading figure, Simon Bolívar, raised a series of irregular armies from the mixed-race and Native American population to defeat the royalists and establish a set of independent states corresponding to the old Spanish provinces – Venezuela, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Peru – while similar events further south had led to the creation of Chile and Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay as independent or autonomous states. Between 1812 and 1824 the Spanish Empire in the Americas was destroyed. Spain had been weakened too much by the devastating Peninsular War (1807-14) to be able to raise enough troops to assert itself: and in any case, of the 42,000 soldiers it did send between 1811 and 1819, only 23,000 were left by 1820, the rest having succumbed to disease and desertion. Spain's fleet, destroyed at the Battle of Trafalgar (1805), was unable to blockade rebel ports or defeat the rebel fleet commanded by the radical ex-naval officer Lord Thomas Cochrane (1775-1860). Sea power was vital to the South American independence movement, and it was British sea power that tipped the balance.

"The British government, while remaining ostensibly neutral, turned a blind eye to men like Cochrane and their securing of supplies from Britain. It was very much in its interest to open up Latin America to free trade, and when Britain recognized the new states in 1823, the Monroe Doctrine proclaimed by the US government, which opposed any European intervention in the Americas, put an end to any further action. In 1826 the British Foreign Secretary George Canning (1770-1827) justified the long years of British support for Bolivar: 'I resolved that if France had Spain, it should not be Spain with the Indies. I called the New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old.' By this time, Brazil had also become independent from Portugal, again as a result of the Napoleonic Wars. When the French conquered Portugal in 1807, the regent Dom Joâo (1767-1826), acting for Queen Maria the Mad (1734-1816), sailed to Rio de Janeiro and set up court there, proclaiming Brazil a full sovereign state with all the rights and privileges that went with it. This reduced Portugal to the status of a province of Brazil, especially when Dom Joâo, becoming king after Maria's death in 1816, decided to stay on in Rio. In 1820, Dom Joâo was forced by political upheavals in Portugal to return to Lisbon as king. He was also obliged to accept the policy of reimposing mercantilist restrictions on trade with Brazil. This is turn led his son Dom Pedro (1798-1834), now regent in Rio, to bow to Brazilian mercantile pressure and become king of an independent constitutional monarchy in Brazil in 1822. Portuguese interference was defeated by Admiral Cochrane's fleet, and the British recognized Brazilian sovereignty in 1825.

"The end of the European empires in the Americas was thus bound up inexorably with events in Europe: the ferment of ideas generated by the French Revolution; the assertion of British sea power in the drive to open up mercantilist-controlled areas of South America to free trade; the severing of connections between the Americas and European colonial metropoles by war; and the insistence of European states on imposing tight and in some cases new economic regulations and taxes on increasingly prosperous and autonomous American colonies. At the same time, events in the Americas also had a profound effect on Europe. For European liberals, radicals and revolutionaries, Latin America (with the exception of Brazil, where slavery continued virtually unchanged through the following decades) became a classic example of the success of movements of emancipation and liberation…"[464]

It was especially in Latin America that the figure of Napoleon had a decisive impact, as the heroic object of the fantasies and dreams of a whole generation of young men. The specifically Latin American species of nationalism owed its origins to the impact of Napoleon on certain young men, who then tried to imitate Napoleon's impact on society as a whole. These were generally ambitious adventurers who managed by hook or by crook to impose themselves on weakened government structures and then claim for themselves the mandate of the people, as if their individual will represented the "general will" of the people. Simple despotism, in other words, disguised as liberation from despotism. Very often these "liberated" peoples had no idea that they had been a distinct nation before, and would have been much happier without any "liberator". They were indeed "forced to be free", in Rousseau's phrase.

The most famous of the "liberators" was Simon Jose Antonio de la Santissima Trinidad de Bolivar. Bolivar was a Creole, that is, a man of Spanish blood born in the Americas, but denied power by the Peninsulares – that, is Spaniards from Spain who came to govern the colonies. He is a good example of the terrible damage done to a whole generation of young men by the heroic image of Napoleon. Just as Napoleon himself stood between the rationalism of the Enlightenment and the passion of the Romantic age, uniting them in the image of fighting for both the ideals of the Enlightenment and the death-defying glory of the romantic hero, so did Bolivar and a host of similar adventurers in Central and South America aspire to unite national "liberation" with personal glory.

"Bolivar," writes Zamoyski, "arrived in the French capital just in time for Napoleon's coronation as Emperor of the French, an event he watched with fascination. In March 1805 ... he saw Napoleon crown himself king of Italy. 'I centred my attention on Napoleon and saw nothing but him out of that crowd of men,' he wrote. He travelled on to Rome under the spell of this vision and there, after considering what he had seen, he ascended the Monte Sacro, where he fell on his knees and swore an oath before Rodriguez to liberate South America."[465]

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[464] Evans, op. cit., pp. 15-17.

Bolivar seized his chance after Napoleon deposed King Ferdinand VII of Spain, which unleashed a strong nationalist backlash in Spain – but not before the legal links between Spain and its colonies had been broken. Returning to Venezuela, Bolivar proceeded to win, lose and finally reconquer Caracas from the Spaniards in a series of civil wars distinguished by appalling savagery on both sides. Although the Venezuelan Republic had been proclaimed on a whites-only franchise in 1811, thereby excluding all Indians and blacks from "the nation", and although Bolivar himself was a slave-owner, on reconquering Caracas in 1813 he immediately likened all royalist Spaniards to wandering Jews, to be "cast out and persecuted", and declared: "Any Spaniard who does not work against tyranny in favour of the just cause, by the most active and effective means, shall be considered an enemy and punished as a traitor to the country and in consequence shall inevitably be shot. Spaniards and Canarios, depend upon it, you will die, even if you are simply neutral, unless you actively espouse the liberation of America."[466]

Bolivar was as good as his word, and proceeded to slaughter the whole Spanish population of Caracas – whereupon the people he had supposedly come to liberate, the Indians and blacks, both free and slave, marched against him under the slogan of "Long live Ferdinand VII"! After murdering a further 1200 Spaniards in retaliation, Bolivar then harangued the inhabitants of Caracas, saying: "You may judge for yourselves, without partiality, whether I have not sacrificed my life, my being, every minute of my time in order to make a nation of you."[467]

Like his idol Napoleon, and many Latin American strongmen since, Bolivar did not like the people expressing its will in elections, which he called "the greatest scourge of republics [which] produce only anarchy". The liberator of Mexico, Agustin de Iturbide, agreed, proclaiming himself Emperor in 1822. But such unrepublican immodesty was nothing compared to Bolivar's, who "hung in the dining room of his villa outside Bogota a huge portrait of himself being crowned by two genii, with the inscription: 'Bolivar is the God of Colombia'."[468]

Nor, in the end, did he have much time for the people he had liberated. Shortly after the assassination of his right-hand man, General José Antonio de Sucre, when he was in self-imposed exile in Europe, he admitted that independence was the only benefit he had brought "at the cost of everything else", and declared: "America [by which he meant Latin America] is ungovernable. He who serves the revolution ploughs the sea… This country will inexorably fall into the hands of uncontrollable multitudes, thereafter to pass under… tyrants of all colours and races. Those who have served the revolution have ploughed the sea. The only thing to do in America is emigrate."[469] And again: "America can be ruled only by an able despotism."[470]

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[465] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 151.
[466] Almond, op. cit., p. 89.
[467] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 156.
[468] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 229.

The truth of this saying appears to be borne out by the history of Argentina, whose war of independence (1810-1818) led to the liberation, not only of Argentina, but also of the whole of the South of South America from Spanish rule. Argentine rulers tended to be *caudillos*, strong men. In general, we may say that the wars of liberation from supposed tyrants are almost always led by "strong men" with tyrannical tendencies…

Despotism also prevailed in another "liberated" country of the region, Paraguay, where it became a "secular replacement" for the former "Jesuit communist empire".[471] "After independence," writes David Landes, "like other debris states of the great Hispanic empire, Paraguay had fallen almost immediately under the control of dictators. The laws said republic, but the practice was one-man rule – a mix of benevolent despotism and populist tyranny. The first of these dictators…, Dr. Gaspar Rodriguez de Francia, was something special. A Jacobin ideologue, and like many of the French variety, a lawyer by training, Francia was committed to a republic of equals and him more equal than the rest. He was he was the 'organic leader', the elitist embodying the popular will… Dr. Francia and his successors, Lopez father and son, would turn the country into an enlightened Sparta – egalitarian, literate, disciplined, and brave."[472]

"It is generally accepted," writes Zamoyski, "that the former Spanish colonies never again achieved the wealth in which they had basked before 1810. Some maintain that they were also better governed, more lawful and more peaceful under Spanish rule than at any time since, and there is something to be said for this view.

"Slavery was finally abolished in the former Spanish colonies in the late 1850s, but economic slavery remained endemic throughout the region. The manner in which independence and nationhood were forced upon these societies gave rise to systemic instability. The various Liberators could not count on devotion to a cause to animate their troops and supporters, as the cause was imaginary. Nor could they mobilize one whole section of the population on behalf of a specific interest for any length of time. And they certainly could not depend on colleagues, who were bound, sooner or later, to contest their authority. They therefore had to keep rearranging alliances and decapitating any faction that grew too strong. In order to enlist the loyalty and sympathy of the lower orders, they would make a point of drawing these into the army. But as such recruits became professionals, they cut their links with the classes they came from and grew into arrogant Praetorians who carried with them an element of incipient mutiny."[473]

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[469] Bolivar, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 546.

[470] Bolivar, in "Mixed Blessing", *The Economist*, December 31, 1999, p. 68.

[471] Horton Box, *The Origins of the Paraguayan War,* University of Illinois, 1927.

[472] Lanes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations,* London: Abacus, 1999, pp. 330, 331.

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[473] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 230.

34. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (5) GERMANY

"The idea of the nation as a political-cultural expression," writes Sebag Sebastian Montefiore, "had been propagated by the French Revolution, yet ironically it was the war of liberation against Napoleon that had really legitimized nationalism as the authentic spirit of a people."[474]

In his book *The Idea of Nationalism* (1944), Hans Kohn, a Zionist of Czech-German background, made an important distinction between two dominant categories of nationalism – French-style, or Western European nationalism, and German-style, or Central and East European nationalism.

These two types of nationalism have been summarized by Shlomo Sand as follows: "Western nationalism, with an essentially voluntarist approach, which developed on either side of the Atlantic Ocean, bounded on the east by Switzerland; and the organic national identity that spread eastward from the Rhine, encompassing Germany, Poland, the Ukraine and Russia.

"Nationalism in the West, except in Ireland, is an original phenomenon that sprang from autochthonous sociopolitical forces, without outside intervention. In most cases it appears when the state, which is engaged in modernization, is well established or is being established. This nationalism draws its ideas from the traditions of the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment, and its principles are based on individualism and liberalism, both legal and political. The hegemonic class that engenders this national consciousness is a powerful, secular bourgeoisie, and it constructs civil institutions with political power that play a decisive role in the formation of liberal democracy. It is a self-confident bourgeoisie, and the national politics it fosters tend generally toward openness and inclusiveness. Becoming a citizen of the United States, Britain, France, the Netherlands or Switzerland depends not only on origin and birth but also on the will to join. For all the differences between national perceptions, anyone naturalized in these countries is seen, legally and ideologically, as a member of the nation, with the state as the common property of the citizenry.

"According to Kohn, the nationalism that developed in Central and Eastern Europe (the Czech case being something of an exception) was, by contrast, a historical product catalyzed principally from outside. It came into being during Napoleon's conquests and began to take shape as a movement of resistance against the ideas and progressive values of the Enlightenment. In these countries, the national idea arose before, and in fact was unconnected with, the consolidation of a modern state apparatus. In these political cultures the middle classes were weak, and the civil institutions they founded were deferential toward the central and aristocratic authorities…"[475]

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[474] Montefiore, *The Romanovs,* London: Wedenfeld and Nicolson, 2016, p. 371.

[475] Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People,* London: Verso, 2009, pp. 46-47.

German-style nationalism was deeply influenced by Romanticism; in fact, it may be called the collective analogue of Romantic individualism. For, as M.S. Anderson writes: "From one point of view, to be a romantic was to stress the individual and the unique, genius, originality, spontaneity. Yet at the same time the romantic sense of history emphasized the impossibility of escaping completely from the past and asserted that the development of human institutions was continuous, not something that proceeded by jumps. Moreover the populism which some of the more politically radical romantics affected, like the organic conception of the state and the emphasis on corporate bodies and peasant communities which appealed to others, did not square easily with assertive individualism."[476]

"For Byronic romantics," writes Berlin, "'I' is indeed an individual, the outsider, the adventurer, the outlaw, he who defies society and accepted values, and follows his own – it may be to his doom, but this is better than conformity, enslavement to mediocrity. But for other thinkers 'I' becomes something much more metaphysical. It is a collective – a nation, a Church, a Party, a class, an edifice in which I am only a stone, an organism of which I am only a tiny living fragment. *It* is the creator; I myself matter only in so far as I belong to the movement, the race, the nation, the class, the Church; I do not signify as a true individual within this super-person to whom my life is organically bound. Hence German nationalism: I do this not because it is good or right or because I like it – I do it because I am a German and this is the German way to live. So also modern existentialism – I do it because I commit myself to this form of existence. Nothing makes me; I do not do it because it is an objective order which I obey, or because of universal rules to which I must adhere; I do it because I create my own life as I do; being what I am, I give it direction and I am responsible for it. Denial of universal values, this emphasis on being above all an element in, and loyal to, a super-self, is a dangerous moment in European history, and has led to a great deal that has been destructive and sinister in modern times; this is where it begins, in the political ruminations and theories of the earliest German romantics and their disciples in France and elsewhere."[477]

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In its early stages Kant, Hegel and Goethe had all praised the Revolution; and Kant's disciple, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, had even declared that "henceforth the French Republic alone can be the country of the Just". Friedrich Schlegel did not see France and Germany as rivals, but wanted "a relationship of mutual cooperation and fulfillment. Novalis too wanted to overcome national rivalries in a Christian Europe. The magazine *Europa* (1803-5) was also dedicated to the same end. It was edited by Friedrich Schlegel, whose brother August Wilhelm spoke of 'European patriotism'."[478]

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[476] Anderson, *The Ascendancy of Europe, 1815-1914,* London: Longman, 1985, p. 337.

[477] Berlin, "My Intellectual Path", *The Power of Ideas*, pp. 10-11.

[478] Dietrich von Engelhardt, "Romanticism in Germany" in Roy Porter and Mikulas Teich (eds.), *Romanticism in National Context,* Cambridge University Press, 1988, p. 117.

Many West Germans preferred the French, rather than the Prussians, to be their overlord. "This explains why, in 1804, a deputation of Rhineland Catholic princes welcomed First Consul Bonaparte during his Charlemagne-themed visit to Aachen, declaring that he was *the first of our Caesars to have crossed the Rhine to drive out the barbarians.* It was a broad hint that the Rhineland Catholics would see the French as liberators, not as conquerors."[479]

Even Prussia's overwhelming defeat by Napoleon at Jena in 1806 did not immediately dim the Germans' enthusiasm for their conqueror. Hegel called him "that world spirit", and the Swiss historian Johannes von Müller declared: "I see that God has given [Napoleon] dominion over the world; never has that been clearer to me than in this war." His worship of Napoleon led to him being made secretary of state for Westphalia in 1807.[480]

However, in the same year of 1807 there began one of the decisive, truly revolutionary turning-points in the history of ideas, when the secular, rationalist cult of the nation on the French model acquired an irrational, quasi-religious, Germanic Romantic passion that was, over the next century and more, to set much of Europe on fire. The cause was undoubtedly, as Zamoyski writes, the same event that had elicited Hegel's and von Müller's eulogies - "Napoleon's crushing defeat of the Prussians at the Battle of Jena in 1806. The humiliation of seeing the prestigious army created by the great Frederick trounced by the French led to painful self-appraisal and underlined the need for regeneration. But it also stung German pride and dispelled the last shreds of sympathy for France – and, with them, the universalist dreams of the previous decade."[481]

The origins of German nationalism go back to this reaction against the French revolution that took place in Germany after Napoleon had marched through it as a conquering and destroying hero… Against the French insistence that they were "the great nation", the universal nation, and therefore were allowed to impose themselves on all others, the Germans defended the uniqueness and holiness of their own nation. Their reaction was born of *wounded pride*, victimhood, a "form of collective humiliation", in Sir Isaiah Berlin's words.[482]

The reaction began with a powerful movement for reform in the army. As Philip Bobbitt writes, "The Prussian military reforms from 1807 on were designed to effect this change. Here it is enough to say that the Prussian force that fought from 1813 onward waged war with the same patriotic motivation as that which inspired the French. As Clausewitz wrote, it was 'a war of the people'"[483]… In 1809 the playwright Heinrich von Kleist called Napoleon "a spirit of destruction who rises from hell"[484], and the Germans were now prepared to reply to violence with violence… The German Masons also changed. As Tikhomirov writes, "having betrayed their fatherland at first, they raised their voices against the French, by virtue of which the German national movement arose"[485]…

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[479] James Hawes, *The Shortest History of Germany* Devon: Old Street Publishing, 2018, pp. 85-86.
[480] Von Müller, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 534.
[481] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 166.
[482] Berlin, "The Bent Twig: On the Rise of Nationalism", *The Crooked Timber of Humanity*. London: John Murry, p. 245.
[483] Bobbitt, *The Shield of Achilles,* London: Penguin, 2002, p. 539.

But the decisive factor was that the Germans at last found a voice, a prophetic voice sounding in the wilderness of German defeat. This was the voice of Fichte in *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807), which used Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones to describe the future regeneration of Germany: "Although the bones of our national unity… may have bleached and dried in the storms and rains and burning suns of several centuries, yet the reanimating breath of the spirit world has not ceased to inspire. It will yet raise the dead bones of our national body and join them bone to bone so that they shall stand forth grandly with a new life… No man, no god, nothing in the realm of possibility can help us, but we alone must help ourselves, as long as we deserve it…"[486]

Fichte's quest for resurrection for the German nation owed less to the resurrection of Christian faith than to the resurrection of paganism, and of the myths of the pagan German gods; whose final burial would come over a century later, in the ruins of Nazi Berlin…

Joseph Görres described this pagan creed as follows: "Let the nation learn to trace itself to its source, delve into its roots: it will find in its innermost being a fathomless well-spring which rises from subterranean treasure; many minds have already been enriched by drawing on the hoard of the Niebelungen; and still it lies there inexhaustible, in the depths of its lair…"[487]

"Fichte," writes Paul Johnson, "was much impressed by Niccolò Machiavelli and saw life as a continuing struggle for supremacy among the nations. The nation-state most likely to survive and profit from this struggle was the one which extended its influence over the lives of its people most widely. And such a nation-state – Germany was the obvious example – would naturally be expansive. 'Every nation wants to disseminate as widely as possible the good points which are peculiar to it. And, in so far as it can, it wants to assimilate the entire human race to itself in accordance with an urge planted in men by God, an urge on which the community of nations, the friction between them, and their development towards perfection rest.'

"This was a momentous statement because it gave the authority of Germany's leading academic philosopher to the proposition that the power impulse of the state was both natural and healthy, and it placed the impulse in the context of a moral world view. Fichte's state was totalitarian and expansive, but it was not revolutionary. Its 'prince' ruled by hereditary divine right. But 'the prince belongs to his nation just as wholly and completely as it belongs to him. Its destiny under divine providence is laid in his hands, and he is responsible for it.' So the prince's public acts must be moral, in accordance with law and justice, and his private life must be above reproach. In relations between states, however, 'there is neither law nor justice, only the law of strength. This relationship places the divine, sovereign fights of fate and of world rule in the prince's hands, and it raises him above the commandments of personal morals and into a higher moral order whose essence is contained in the words, *Salus et decus populi suprema lex esto*.' This was an extreme and menacing statement that justified any degree of ruthlessness by the new, developing nation-state in its pursuit of self-determination and self-preservation. The notion of a 'higher moral order', to be determined by the state's convenience, was to find expression, in the 20th century, in what Lenin called 'the Revolutionary Conscience' and Hitler 'the Higher Law of the Party'. Moreover, there was no doubt what kind of state Fichte had in mind. It was not only totalitarian but German. In his *Addresses to the German Nation* (1807), he laid down as axiomatic that the state of the future can only be the national state, in particular the German national state, the German Reich."[488]

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[484] Von Kleist, in Cohen and Major, op. cit.,

[485] Tikhomirov, op. cit., p. 455.

[486] Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 535.

[487] Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 535.

The link between Fichte's egoistic metaphysics and his nationalism was indicated by Bertrand Russell. Fichte was also an idealist philosopher, who "carried subjectivism to a point which seems almost to involve a kind of insanity. He holds that the Ego is the only reality, and that it exists because it posits itself; the non-Ego, which has a subordinate reality, also exists only because the Ego posits it… The Ego as a metaphysical concept easily became confused with the empirical Fichte; since the Ego was German, it followed that the Germans were superior to all other nations. 'To have character and to be a German,' says Fichte, 'undoubtedly mean the same thing'. On this basis he worked out a whole philosophy of nationalistic totalitarianism, which had great influence in Germany."[489]

"As the revolution progressed," writes Zamoyski, "the feeling grew in Germany that the French, with their habitual shallowness, had got it all wrong. They had allowed the pursuit of liberty to degenerate into mob rule and mass slaughter of innocent people because they perceived liberty in mechanical terms. German thinkers were more interested in 'real liberty', and many believed that it was the 'corrupt' nature of the French that had doomed the revolution to failure. Such conclusions allowed for a degree of smugness, suggesting as they did that the French Enlightenment, for all its brilliance, had been flawed, while German intellectual achievements had been more profound and more solid.

"Fichte identified Germany's greatness as lying in her essentially spiritual destiny. She would never stoop to conquer others, and while nations such as the

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[488] Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern, World Society 1815-1830*, London: Phoenix, 1992, pp. 810-811.

[489] Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1946, pp. 744-745.

French, the English or the Spanish scrambled for wealth and dominance, Germany's role was to uphold the finest values of humanity.[490]

Similar claims to moral superiority and a moral mission for Germany were made by Herder, Hölderlin, Schlegel and others…

"It had been central to Herder's argument that each nation, by virtue of its innate character, had a special role to play in the greater process of history. One after another, nations ascended the world stage to fulfill their ordained purpose. The French were crowding the proscenium, but there was a growing conviction that Germany's time was coming, and her destiny was about to unfold. The Germans certainly seemed ready for it. The country was awash with under-employed young men, and since the days of the proto-romantic movement of *Sturm und Drang* the concept of action, both as a revolt against stultifying rational forces and as a transcendent act of self-assertion, had become well established. Fichte equated virtually any action, provided it was bold and unfettered, with liberation.

"The problem was that the nation was still not properly constituted. Some defined it by language and culture, or, like Fichte, by a level of consciousness. The Germans were, according to him, more innately creative than other nations, being the only genuine people in Europe, an *Urvolk*, speaking the only authentic language, *Ursprache*. Others saw the nation as a kind of church, defined by the 'mission' of the German people. Adam Müller affirmed that this mission was to serve humanity with charity, and that any man who dedicated himself to this common purpose should be considered a German. In his lectures of 1806, Fichte made the connection between committed action and nationality. Those who stood up and demonstrated their vitality were part of the *Urvolk*, those who did not were un-German. Hegel saw the people as a spiritual organism, whose expression, the collective spirit or *Volksgeist*, was its validating religion. The discussion mingled elements of theology, science and metaphysics to produce uplifting and philosophically challenging confusion.

"But in the absence of clear geographical or political parameters, Germany's national existence was ultimately dependent on some variant of the racial concept. And this began to be stated with increasing assertiveness. 'In itself every nationality is a completely closed and rounded whole, a common tie of blood relationship unites all its members; all… must be of one mind and must stick together like one man', according to Joseph Görres, who had once been an enthusiastic internationalist. 'This instinctive urge that binds all members into a whole is a law of nature which takes preference over all artificial contracts… The voice of nature in ourselves warns us and points to the chasm between us and the alien'.

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[490] Thus Fichte said: "The genius of foreigners will be like the amiable hummingbird [or] the industrious and skilful bee which gathers in the honey… but the German spirit will be the eagle which will lift his heavy body on powerful wings and, through a long and exciting flight, climbs ever higher and higher towards the sun" (*Addresses to the German Nation*). (V.M.)

"The location and identification of this 'closed and rounded whole' involved not just defining German ethnicity, but also delving into the past in search of a typically German and organic national unit to set against the old rationalist French view of statehood based on natural law and the rights of man. The bible of this tendency was Tacitus's *Germania*. Placed in its own time, this book is as much about Rome as about Germanic tribes. It imagines the ultimate non-Rome, a place that had not been cleared and cultivated, and a people innocent of the arts of industry and leisure. The forest life it describes is the antithesis to the classical culture of Rome. It is also in some ways the original noble savage myth, representing everything that decadent Rome had lost; beneath Tacitus's contempt for the savage denizens of the forest lurks a vague fear that by gaining in civilization the Romans had forfeited certain rugged virtues.

"The German nationalists picked up this theme, which mirrored their relation to French culture. Roma and Germania, the city and the forest, corruption and purity, could stand as paradigms for the present situation. The ancient Teutonic hero Arminius (Hermann) had led the revolt of the German tribes against Rome and defeated the legions in the Teutonburg Forest. His descendants who aspired to throw off the 'Roman' universalism of France could take heart."[491]

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Dostoyevsky developed this theme of the age-old opposition between Germany and Rome, of the perpetual revolt of the former against the latter: "Germany's aim is one; it existed before, always. It is her *Protestantism* – not that single formula of Protestantism which was conceived in Luther's time, but her continual Protestantism, her continual protest against the Roman world, ever since Arminius, - against everything that was Rome and Roman in aim, and subsequently – against everything that was bequeathed by ancient Rome to the new Rome and to all those peoples who inherited from Rome her idea, her formula and element; against the heir of Rome and everything that constitutes this legacy…

"Ancient Rome was the first to generate the idea of the universal unity of men, and was the first to start thinking of (and firmly believing in) putting it practically into effect in the form of universal empire. However, this formula fell before Christianity – the formula but not the idea. For this idea is that of European mankind; through this idea its civilization came into being; for it alone mankind lives.

"Only the idea of the universal Roman empire succumbed, and it was replaced by a new ideal, also universal, of a communion in Christ. This new ideal bifurcated into the Eastern ideal of a purely spiritual communion of men, and the Western European, Roman Catholic, papal ideal diametrically opposed to the Eastern one.

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[491] Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 162, 163-165.

"This Western Roman Catholic incarnation of the idea was achieved in its own way, having lost, however, its Christian, spiritual foundation and having replaced it with the ancient Roman legacy. [The] Roman papacy proclaimed that Christianity and its idea, without the universal possession of lands and peoples, are not spiritual but political. In other words, they cannot be achieved without the realization on earth of a new universal Roman empire now headed not by the Roman emperor but by the Pope. And thus it was sought to establish a new universal empire in full accord with the spirit of the ancient Roman world, only in a different form.

"Thus, we have in the Eastern ideal – first, the spiritual communion of mankind in Christ, and thereafter, in consequence of the spiritual unity of all men in Christ and as an unchallenged deduction therefrom – a just state and social communion. In the Roman interpretation we have a reverse situation: first it is necessary to achieve firm state unity in the form of a universal empire, and only after that, perhaps, spiritual fellowship under the rule of the Pope as the potentate of this world.

"Since that time, in the Roman world this scheme has been progressing and changing uninterruptedly, and with its progress the most essential part of the Christian element has been virtually lost. Finally, having rejected Christianity spiritually, the heirs of the ancient Roman world likewise renounced [the] papacy. The dreadful French revolution has thundered. In substance, it was but the last modification and metamorphosis of the same ancient Roman formula of universal unity. The new formula, however, proved insufficient. The new idea failed to come true. There even was a moment when all the nations which had inherited the ancient Roman tradition were almost in despair. Oh, of course, that portion of society which in 1789 won political leadership, i.e. the bourgeoisie, triumphed and declared that there was no necessity of going any further. But all those minds which by virtue of the eternal laws of nature are destined to dwell in a state of everlasting universal fermentation seeking new formulae of some ideal and a new word indispensable to the progress of the human organism, - they all rushed to the humiliated and the defrauded, to all those who had not received their share in the new formula of universal unity proclaimed by the French revolution of 1789. These proclaimed a new word of their own, namely, the necessity of universal fellowship not for the equal distribution of rights allotted to a quarter, or so, of the human race, leaving the rest to serve as raw material and a means of exploitation for the happiness of that quarter of mankind, but, on the contrary – for universal equality, with each and every one sharing the blessings of this world, whatever these may prove. It was decided to put this scheme into effect by resorting to *all* means, i.e., not by the means of Christian civilisation – without stopping at anything.

"Now, what has been Germany's part in this, throughout these two thousand years? The most characteristic and essential trait of this great, proud and peculiar people – ever since their appearance on the historical horizon – consisted of the fact that they never consented to assimilate their destiny and their principles to those of the outermost Western world, i.e. the heirs of the ancient Roman tradition. The Germans have been *protesting* against the latter throughout these two thousand years. And even though they did not (never did so far) utter 'their word', or set forth their strictly formulated ideal in lieu of the ancient Roman idea, nevertheless, it seems that, within themselves, they always were convinced that they were capable of uttering this 'new word' and of leading mankind. They struggled against the Roman world as early as the times of Arminius, and during the epoch of Roman Christianity they, more than any other nation, struggled for the sovereign power against the new Rome.

"Finally, the Germans protested most vehemently, deriving their formula of protest from the innermost spiritual, elemental foundation of the Germanic world: they proclaimed the freedom of inquiry, and raised Luther's banner. This was a terrible, universal break: the formula of protest had been found and filled with a content; even so it still was a negative formula, and the new, *positive* word was not yet uttered.

"And now, the Germanic spirit, having uttered this 'new word' of protest, as it were, fainted for a while, quite parallel to an identical weakening of the former strictly formulated unity of the forces of his adversary. The outermost Western world, under the influence of the discovery of America, of new sciences and new principles, sought to reincarnate itself in a new truth, in a new phase.

"When, at the time of the French revolution, the first attempt at such a reincarnation took place, the Germanic spirit became quite perplexed, and for a time lost its identity and faith in itself. It proved impotent to say anything against the new ideas of the outermost Western world. Luther's Protestantism had long outlived its time, while the idea of free inquiry had long been accepted by universal science. Germany's enormous organism more than ever began to feel that it had no flesh, so to speak, and no form for self-expression. It was then that the pressing urge to consolidate itself, at least outwardly, into a harmonious organism was born in Germany in anticipation of the new future aspects of her eternal struggle against the outermost Western world…"[492]

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[492] F.M. Dostoyevsky, *The Diary of a Writer*, May-June, 1877, chapter III, 1; Haslemere: Ianmead, 1984, pp. 727, 728-730. "It may perhaps be accidental," writes Sir Karl Popper, "but it is in any case remarkable, that there is still a cultural frontier between Western Europe and the regions of Central Europe which coincide very nearly with those regions that did not enjoy the blessings of Augustus' Roman Empire, and that did not enjoy the blessings of the Roman peace, i.e. of the Roman civilization. The same 'barbarian' regions are particularly prone to be affected by mysticism, even though they did not invent mysticism. Bernard of Clairvaux had his greatest successes in Germany, where later Eckhart and his school flourished, and also Boehme.

"Much later Spinoza, who attempted to combine Cartesian intellectualism with mystical tendencies, rediscovered the theory of a mystical intellectual intuition, which, in spite of Kant's

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Let us return to the narrative of Germany's War of Liberation… "The French," continues Zamoyski, "became villains, and Napoleon himself was even portrayed as the Antichrist, a focus for the crusading struggle of deliverance that would regenerate Germany. Poets composed patriotic verse and anti-Napoleonic songs…

"But while the mood changed, reality had not. Germany was still divided and cowered under French hegemony. To the deep shame of much of her officer corps, Prussia was still an ally of France when Napoleon invaded Russia in 1812. Her forces, which did not take part in the march on Moscow, were to support the French and secure their flank in East Prussia. And it was when the frozen remnants were trudging back into Prussia and Poland that this support would have been most welcome. But it was precisely then that the Prussian military judged it safe to show their colours. General von Yorck, in command of 14,000 men in East Prussia, found himself in a pivotal position. With his support, Marshal Macdonald would be able to hold the line of the River Niemen and keep the Russians out of Poland; without it, he had no option but full retreat. The Prussian general had been in touch with the Russians for some time, through the intermediary of a young German officer in Russian service by the name of Carl von Clausewitz. On Christmas Day 1812 Yorck met the commander of the Russian advance guard and, by a convention he signed with them at Tauroggen, repudiated Prussia's alliance with France. It was an act of mutiny, the first in a series of acts by the German army to 'save' the fatherland against the orders of its political leaders. It was also the signal for all the nationalists to come out into the open.

"The irascible Ernst Moritz Arndt was well to the fore. 'Oh men of Germany!' he exhorted, 'feel again your God, hear and fear the eternal, and you heard and fear also your *Volk*; you feel again in God the honour and dignity of your fathers, their glorious history rejuvenates itself again in you, their firm and gallant virtue reblossoms in you, the whole German Fatherland stands again before you in the august halo of past centuries… One faith, one love, one courage, and one enthusiasm must gather again the whole German *Volk* in brotherly community… Be Germans, be one, will to be one by love and loyalty, and no devil will vanquish you.'

"The king of Prussia did not feel quite brave enough to 'be German' yet. He ordered the arrest of Yorck, and then moved to Breslau, where he was out of reach of the French. In March 1813, when he saw that it was safe for him to jump on the anti-Napoleon bandwagon, Frederick William announced the formation of citizens' volunteer forces, the Landwehr and the Landsturm. On 17 March he issued a proclamation to the effect that his soldiers would 'fight for our

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strong opposition, led to the post-Kantian rise of 'Idealism', to Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel" (*The Open Society and its Enemies,* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, p. 353).

independence and the honour of the *Volk*', and summoned every son of the fatherland to participate. 'My cause is the cause of my *Volk*,' he concluded, less than convincingly. But nobody was looking too closely at anyone's motives in the general excitement. The cause of the German fatherland justified everything. 'Strike them dead!' Heinrich von Kleist had urged the soldiers setting off to war with the French. 'At the last judgement you will not be asked for your reasons!'

"The campaign of 1813, when the patched-up Napoleonic forces attempted to stand up to the combined armies of Russia, Prussia, Sweden and Austria, and finally succumbed at Leipzig, should, according to Chateaubriand, go down in history as 'the campaign of young Germany, of the poets'. That was certainly the perception. The by no means young Fichte finished his lecture on the subject of duty and announced to his students at Berlin that the course was suspended until they gained liberty or death. He marched out of the hall amid wild cheers, and led the students off to put their names down for the army…

"The War of Liberation, *Freiheitskrieg*, was, above all, a war of purification and self-discovery. It did not stop with the expulsion of French forces from Germany in 1813. If anything, it was in the course of 1814, when Napoleon's forces were fighting for survival on French soil, that the War of Liberation really got going in Germany…

"But the War of Liberation was being waged no less vehemently at the cultural level. The poets were not squeamish when it came to singing of the national crusade, while the painters rallied to the cause in a memorable way. Caspar David Friedrich, who had already done so much to represent the symbolic German landscape as an object of worship through a series of paintings in which people are depicted contemplating its wonder like so many saints adoring the nativity in a medieval triptych, now turned to glorifying the nation. He painted several representations of an imaginary tomb of Hermann, evocatively set among craggy boulders and fir trees. And he also produced various set-pieces representing the war. Other painters depicted groups of patriotic German volunteers going forth in their hats to free the fatherland. Joseph Görres led a movement demanding the completion of Cologne Cathedral as a sign of German regeneration. 'Long shall Germany live in shame and humiliation, a prey to inner conflict and alien arrogance, until her people return to the ideals from which they were seduced by selfish ambition, and until true religion and loyalty, unity of purpose and self-denial shall again render them capable of erecting such a building as this,' he wrote."[493]

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In 1815 the Congress of Vienna "sanctioned the existing division of the German territories into a German Confederation of thirty-nine states with a common Diet presided over by Austria. This was supposed to replace the old Empire, and in order to suggest a continuity which nobody felt, the Diet was to meet at Frankfurt, where the emperors had traditionally been crowned. Austria had emerged from the revolutionary and Napoleonic era greatly weakened, while Prussia had been strengthened, notably with the Rhineland. This not only made what had been a north-eastern fringe state of Germany a more ubiquitous influence, it also established Prussia as the defender of the German lands against possible future French aggression.

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[493] Zamoyski, op. cit., pp. 166, 167-168, 169-170. In the same year of 1813, and in the same city of Leipzig, where Napoleon was finally defeated by Prussia, the composer Richard Wagner was born. We shall see that he, too, was to make an important contribution to German nationalism…

"Germany was, by and large, in far better shape than it had been in 1789. The absurd patchwork of a thousand sovereignties had been rationalized into a manageable thirty-nine, and communication between them was facilitated by the germs of a federal structure. But a great many people, particularly the young, were not happy. As Talleyrand reported from Vienna to Louis XVIII, the unification of Germany had become 'their cry, their doctrine, their religion, carried even to fanaticism'."[494]

"University circles were particularly inflamed. New societies were formed, along a pattern thought up by a professor of history at the university of Jena. These *Burschenschaften*, as they were called, were less rowdy and more spiritual than the earlier associations of gymnasts. They were Christian, fervently nationalist, anti-French and hostile to the Jews, who were beginning to play a part in German intellectual life. They adopted the uniform of the Lützow Corps, complete with *altdeutsch* floppy hat. They wore beards and long hair. They carried daggers in their belts. They marched under a flag of black, red and gold, thought to have been the colours of the old German Empire. As faith in the future waned, faith in the past grew, and history supplied many of the comforts traditionally associated with religion. They sought refuge from a world drifting into an age of material progress in a comforting vision of a heroic Teutonic past…

"On 18 October 1817, the fourth anniversary of the Battle of Leipzig, 468 members of the *Burschenschaften* from twelve universities met at the great medieval castle of the Wartburg, where Martin Luther had translated the Bible into German. In celebrating the anniversary of Luther's launching of the Reformation and the anniversary of Leipzig, they were proclaiming their rejection of Rome as well as France. They were also following the Romantic urge to recover the authentic self from the contrived conventions within which it was supposedly trapped. In the figure of Martin Luther they identified one who had done just this.

"The students processed into the Knights' Hall, where they listened to speeches by veterans of the war of liberation, sang hymns, recited prayers, took oaths and exchanged kisses. In the evening, they marched by torchlight to a nearby hill, on which they lit a great bonfire to commemorate the Battle of

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[494] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 193.

Leipzig. They then cast into the flames a number of books that calumniated Germany or otherwise incurred their displeasure – including the Code Napoleon – and various symbols of un-German repression that to their mind scarred the Prussian Army, such as a Hessian soldier's wig and a corporal's baton. A group of students from Giessen wanted to march off to the battlefield of Leipzig and proclaim a republic there and then. 'Oh! My German people, raise yourself to the high moral dignity of humanity,' wailed a theology student by the name of Karl Ludwig Sand. 'German people, do not allow your sacred nature to be trodden underfoot.'"[495]

The torchlight procession, the burning of books – the Fascist future was already visible… And indeed, under the impact of the new collectivist nationalism, individualist liberalism withered. As George L. Mosse writes: "Even a devoted Liberal like Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) came, in the end, to the conclusion that 'there are only two realities, God and the nation.' At first he tried to combine individualism with a confrontation of the national problem as Fichte had done, but he, too, came to the realization that 'man is nothing by himself except through the force of the whole with which he tries to fuse himself.' Such romanticism swept before it the older cosmopolitan and humanitarian ideas of the last century. The old Goethe, who still proclaimed such sentiments and who derided the new nationalism, was as isolated a figure in Weimar as, a century later, the old Benedetto Croce was to be an isolated figure in the new Italy. His concept of liberal freedom was as outdated then, so it seemed, as Goethe's was after the German wars of liberation against the French. Friedrich Ludwig Jahn was the wave of the future. His book *Volkstum* (1810) glorified the German *Volk* who represented the whole of humanity and whose task it was to civilize the world by force. But the *Volk* must keep itself pure and undefiled as a race; Rome had fallen because races had mixed. Here already we can see the leanings of the glorification of the *Volk* toward an explicit racism. The state formed by the *Volk* would be democratic – Jahn as yet kept representative institutions and did not push the mystical unity of the *Volk* to the point where it superseded all representative forms of government.

"The 'force of the whole' was the German nation singled out by God as the only valid *Volk*..."[496]

Important contributions to the new, proto-fascist ideology were made by philosophers of history such as Hegel and historians such as Leopold von Ranke and Ernst Arndt. Thus von Ranke wrote in 1836 "that the fatherland 'is with us, in us'. And as 'a mysterious something that informs the lowest among us' the idea of the nation 'precedes any form of government and animates and permeates all its forms'."[497] Again, Arndt redefined "freedom" as, in the words of Mosse, "the right to integrate one's self with the tradition and customs of one's own people. The innocent and just against whom no force must be used are those who desire to live in that way. In Arndt's mind these were the Prussians opposed to Napoleon. What is rejected from the 'religion' of liberty is its cosmopolitanism based on the view of a natural law which makes the goal of freedom the same all over the world. This emphasis upon freedom as circumscribed by national customs and traditions contrasts with the liberal ideas of men like Cobden and Bright in England. For them liberty was the same in all nations, a moral imperative which transcended nationalism and was indeed hostile to it."

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[495] Zamoyski, *Holy Madness,* pp. 194-195.

[496] Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe*, Boulder & London: Westview Press, 1988, pp. 58-59.

[497] Spellmann, *Monarchies,* London: Reaktion Press, 2001, p. 209.

Arndt foreshadowed the future, the rise of what in Germany would be called "national liberalism", the increasing stress upon the freedom of the historic nation rather than upon the universality of freedom... From now on, European man would only rarely be induced to die for God or Church or Sovereign. But he could be induced to die for his country; for the nation was now seen to incarnate the highest value, whether that value was defined as simply racial superiority (Germany), or cultural pre-eminence (France), or the rule of law in freedom (England).

35. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (6) BRITAIN AND IRELAND

British nationalism was unusual in that it derived neither from the Enlightenment nationalism of the French type, nor from the Counter-Enlightenment nationalism of the German type, being older than both. English nationalism has existed since the time of Bede in the eighth century, and after its suppression by the Normans, it revived in a somewhat different form in the Middle Ages.

In modern times, as David Starkey has effectively argued, British (or, as it then was, English) nationalism began with Henry VIII's decision to remove his kingdom from every foreign jurisdiction, whether secular or ecclesiastical. This "splendid isolation" – a "Brexit" before Brexit - was reinforced by the victory over the Spanish Armada and the mystique of the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth I, who as it were "nationalized" the monarchy. However, British nationalism somewhat changed its institutional basis after the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, when it was seen to be incarnate in the sovereignty, not of the king, but of parliament (which in that year overthrew the lawful king, James II). Nevertheless, the king remained an integral and important part of British nationalism for centuries to come.

This was especially evident at the Golden Jubilee of King George III in 1809. "Behind all the pageantry and partying lay a growing recognition that, since the 1790s, the monarch had come to embody, in a way that no transient, controversial politician ever could, the nation's determined resolve to fight against the French; and there was an increased and widespread awareness that George III had come to stand for order, hierarchy and legitimacy against the chaos, terror and usurpation of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic regimes that had taken hold in Paris. The young sovereign who had earlier been criticized for interfering too much in politics, and for the disastrous loss of the American colonies, had morphed and evolved in old age into a venerable and venerated figure, revered and acclaimed as 'the Father of the People'."[498]

"The threat of invasion," writes Jenny Uglow, "the propaganda and parades, the raising of the volunteers and the fireworks at every victory on sea and land had fostered a spirit of nationhood… The mass mobilization of the war years and the huge demonstrations of the peace movement had made everyone feel involved with the affairs of the nation, and the effect on the political culture was transformative: governments and politicians had to adapt to the world of the popular press and mass opinion, in the knowledge that they could never return to the old deferential culture. This change was born of the wars, almost without people knowing it… Everyone shared in the wars…"[499]

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[498] Cannadine, *Victorious Century,* p. 79.

[499] Uglow, *In these Times: Living in Britain through Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815*, London: Faber & Faber, 2014.

And so, as Starkey writes, "nationalism… played a part in the downfall of Napoleon's empire second only to British arms."[500]

In the rest of the nineteenth century British nationalism – and it was truly British now, in that the Scots played almost as big a part in the administration of the empire, as the English - continued to be reinforced by the seemingly inexorable growth of the British Empire, which made Britain into the world's first truly global super-power. As Rebecca Fraser writes, "As befitted the nation over which shone the glory of Waterloo and the honour of removing the menace of Napoleon, and which had financed a great deal of the war, Britain did extremely well out of the peace. After Trafalgar she had seized the opportunity to rid herself of any rivals at sea, and she remained the dominant country in the carrying trade. She now usefully expanded her trading bases throughout the world, adding Malta, the Ionian Islands, the small island of Heligoland off the coast of Hanover and some important former French West Indian islands – St. Lucia, Tobago and Mauritius - to her colonial possessions. The route to India was safeguarded by her continuing to hold the Cape of Good Hope, which she had captured from the Dutch, as well as Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), at the door of India. Britain's naval and commercial supremacy was confirmed."[501]

Since 1741, when the British Empire was just beginning, "Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves" had become the national anthem. A century later, when the empire had vastly expanded, these words were still more appropriate. And even today (2020), when the empire has disappeared, they have remained an essential part of the patriotic concert, "The Last Night of the Proms", showing how closely intertwined British nationalism and British imperialism became.

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However, Britain was composed not only of the English: the so-called "Celtic fringe" of the British Isles included the Celtic, non-Anglo Saxon nations of the Welsh, the Scottish and the Irish. The Scottish and the Welsh were content, until the later twentieth century, to submit, albeit with grumbling, to English domination of the island of Great Britain. But it was a different case with the Irish. The question was: were the Irish really a different nation from the British?

Irish nationalism was as old as the hills. As early as the fifth century the British bishop St. Patrick had heard "the call of the Irish", calling him to bring the Gospel to that island race. However, after that priceless gift, the British contribution to Irish life had been far from constructive; and we may even say that Irish nationalism defined itself largely in opposition to, and as being *not* included in, British nationalism.

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[500] Starkey, *Crown & Country,* p. 450.

[501] Fraser, *The People's History of Britain,* London: Chatto & Windus, 2003,p.509.

"The country," writes David Cannadine, "was dominated by a small, landowning, Protestant [Anglican] ruling class, most of whom were settlers of English or Scottish ancestry, known as the 'Ascendancy', and they controlled the Irish parliament and the country's political and social life. Their forebears had conquered Ireland in the seventeenth century, but by the late 1790s many of them were absentees living in Britain, and their relations with the indigenous majority of the Irish population, who were generally poor, ill-educated Catholic peasants or agicultural labourers, and who were denied civil rights on the grounds of their religion, were far from close or cordial. There was also a small Prebyterian middle class that was a significant force among the legal and commercial circles of Belfast, and a larger Presbyterian working class in the more economically developed parts of Ulster. These dissenters disliked the Catholics, whom they regarded as inferior and uncivilized, and also the Ascendancy families, whom they disdained as effete, snobbish and overbearing, and they were equally hostile to the established, Protestant Church of Ireland. It was not easy for the British ruling elite to deal with any of these three groups. As the Gordon Riots in London had shown as recently as 1780, there was a deep prejudice and ingrained hostility in Protestant Britain towards Roman Catholics and to 'popery'. Although equally anti-Catholic, the Presbyterian middle- and working-classes were at best ambivalent about the British connection, and resented the fact that, like the Catholics, they were prevented from holding certain political and administrative offices [since they were not Anglican]. Meanwhile, the London men of government were unequally uncertain about the Ascendancy families: they might be Britain's only reliable ally as an 'Irish garrison'; but their 'alien' presence and power incurred the animosity of the Catholic majority, which meant that in any case they would lack popular legitimacy.

"Since the passing of what was termed 'Poynings' Law' in 1494, the Irish parliament had been legally subordinated to the English (and subsequently the British) legislature, and this had been confirmed by the passing of the Declaratory Act in 1720. It was rarely invoked in practice during the eighteenth century, as the British knew that co-operation with the Ascendancy was essential; but the Anglo-Irish elite still bridled at such quasi-colonial inferiority as, indeed, did the Presbyterians and Catholics. This inferior status was further proclaimed by the presence at Dublin Castle of the Lord Lieutenant, who was the agent and representative of the British monarch and cabinet. But when France entered the American War of Independence on the side of the American colonists, the British government had been forced to transfer the troops stationed in Ireland to other parts of the empire where they were more urgently needed. Fearing a possible French invasion, the Irish Protestants established units of so-called Volunteers, who were not only drawn from Ascendancy families, but in some cases from Presbyterians and even from Catholics as well. There may have been as many as 40,000 of them. They were fully armed, and although undoubtedly hostile to the French, they were also determined to extract concessions from the British. By 1781, when the War of Independence was as good as lost, and with his government discredited. Lord North felt compelled to grant the Irish parliament autonomy from Westminster. But the Younger Pitt, who came to power the following year, feared that the newly liberated legislature lacked legitimacy, because the majority Catholic population were unable to vote or to hold public office. Accordingly, in 1793 he had pressured the Irish parliament to enfranchise Catholics possessing what was termed a 'forty-shilling freehold'. The Ascendancy was stunned and resentful, the Presbyterians annoyed, and the Catholics unreconciled because they were still denied the right to sit in parliament or hold high office. Such British interference in Irish affairs, which seemed to be undermining the legislative autonomy that had ostensibly been granted in 1782, was also widely resented.

"The result was growing popular discontent, directed at London rather than Dublin, which was further fuelled by the French Revolution, and which would represent a greater threat to the metropolitan governing elite than the subversive mobilization and organization that were occurring simultaneously in Britain. In October 1791 the Society of United Irishmen was founded, with strong Catholic and some Protestant support, and led by Theobald Wolfe Tone, who had been greatly influenced and inspired by recent events in France. The original intention of the United Irishmen was to agitate for constitutional reform, but by the middle of the decade their failure to make progress led them to demand complete separation from Britain and to embrace republicanism. The French National Assembly sent messages of support, Wolfe Tone was well received in Paris, and the revolutionary government sent agents to Ireland to assess the potential for a full-scale rebellion. The United Irishmen also sought to collaborate with a secret society known as the Defenders, whose members were drawn largely from the Catholic peasantry, and who resented having to pay tithes to the established Church of Ireland. Elsewhere in Europe peasants were rarely among the revolutionary vanguards of the 1790s, but the Defenders resorted to rural violence to intimidate the Protestant landlords and farmers, and embraced republicanism. In response, the Protestants established their own society in Ulster in 1795, known as the Orange Order, which sought to retaliate against the Defenders' disruptive activism. The resulting sectarian bloodshed, combined with an upsurge in anti-British agitation, the growing demands for a republic and the undeniable evidence that the United Irishmen and the Defenders were eager to ally with France, meant Pitt's government felt compelled to act. Between 1795 and 1798, legislation was passed imposing harsh punishments on the United Irishmen and Defenders, banning popular assemblies, increasing the powers of magistrates, declaring the taking of oaths illegal, and suspending habeas corpus. At the same time, the Dublin Castle authorities established a new armed forced named the Yeomanry, led by Protestant landlords and manned largely by their very own Protestant tenants.

"The London government's anxieties that Ireland was on the brink of a massive, French-supported revolutionary uprising, which would be embraced by Catholics and Protestants alike, were well borne out when, in December 1796, a fleet of forty-three French ships, carrying 15,000 soldiers, came close to landing on the west coast of Ireland at Bantry Bay and was only prevented from doing so by stormy weather. A mere 400 French troops managed to land, and they were soon killed or captured by the local Yeomanry. The commander of the British forces, General Lake, retaliated with reprisals that were especially savage in Ulster, which only served to alienate many Protestants and Presbyterians. Meanwhile, the United Irishmen had set up a Directory in Dublin, modeled on the French revolutionary government in Paris, and in May 1798 thousands of rebels took up arms in the Irish capital and to the south and west of the country, with the cry of 'Death or Liberty'. By the end of the month, the rebels had established themselves in County Wexford, where they declared a republic and established a provisional government consisting of four Protestants and four Catholics. In June the Ulster United Irishmen, most of whom were Presbyterians, rebelled in County Antrim, and in August 1798 a French naval force landed at Killala in County Mayo on the northwest coast of Ireland. But it was too little, too late, since by then the Wexford rebels and the Ulster rebellion had both been brutally suppressed, and thousands of Protestants and Catholics had been killed in some of the bloodiest and most ferocious fighting in Ireland's history. In October British naval forces intercepted a French ship carrying Wolfe Tone to Donegal with the aim of fomenting a further rising. He was arrested, tried and sentenced to death, but committed suicide before he could be hanged. The Irish rebellion, which had been the most significant uprising in the British Isles since the Civil Wars of the mid-seventeenth century, was over, and it was put down as harshly as the naval mutinies in the previous year: many of the leaders were execute on the spot, and several hundred Defenders and United Irishmen were transported to Australia.

"With widespread subversion in Britain the threat of further rebellion in Ireland, and the risk of another French invasion on Britain's vulnerable western flank, Pitt and his colleagues determined at the end of 1798 to consolidate the two kingdoms into one single polity. The Union that eventually came into being in January 1901 was thus essentially a defensive wartime measure, in response to recent political and military events on both sides of the Irish Sea, rather than the culmination of some inevitable historical process, or the outcome of a long premeditated plan whereby the two nations were eventually bound to be conjoined. As such, it was also but one early example of the sort of constitutional rejigging and geopolitical rearrangements between governments, people and nations that would frequently take place elsewhere in nineteenth-century Europe. Yet in ways that could not have been foreseen in such troubled and traumatic times, the hurriedly created United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland would become the single most influential player on the nineteenth-century global stage, while Irish affairs would loom larger in British political, parliamentary and public life than they had done during the eighteenth century. But while the Act of Union might have made the British more secure in fighting subversion at home and in prosecuting the war against France abroad, it did not make Ireland any easier to govern, or the Irish people for their part any happier, and the full consolidation of the two kingdoms and the two peoples never took place. For as the consequence of legislation that was enacted in great haste, but also never fully completed, the Anglo-Irish Union was fundamentally flawed, and from these deficiencies flowed many of the problems with which Irish patriots and British public men vainly struggled during the nineteenth century. In particular, the governing elite in London could never decide whether the Irish were fellow Britons, to be conciliated as members of the Union, or a different and alien population altogether, to be coerced by Westminster and Whitehall…

"From 1802 to 1814 the United Kingdom was a nation that combined disaffection and popular protest with patriotic zeal, which witnessed severe short-term fluctuations in the economy along with long-term growth, which suffered financial crises even as its capacity to raise money and to spend it was unprecedented, and which for much of the time seemed to be losing the war with Napoleonic France even as it eventually emerged victorious and triumphant. There was also the matter of Ireland, recently but incompletely incorporated into the Union. To be sure, there were no repetitions of the French invasions of the late 1790s, and many Irishmen served in the British armies that fought Napoleon. But the 1800s also witnessed greater coercion in Ireland than in Great Britain, widespread regret that the intransigence of George III made Catholic Emancipation impossible, and a growing recognition that the Irish a different and largely inferior race, and that the Union was not working. In 1812 the two pre-eminent British figures in Europe, the one military, the other political, were Wellington and Castlereagh. Both were descended from Irish landed families, but Wellington 'preferred England because my friends and relations reside there', while Castlereagh was thought to be 'so very unlike an Irishman'. On the tenth anniversary of the Act of Union, Henry Grattan, who was undeniably an Irishman, and had sat in the Dublin parliament before being compelled to relocate to Westminster, inquired: 'Where is the consolidation? Where is the common interest? Where is the heart that should animate the whole?' In the same year, 1812, Edward Wakefield produced his two-volume *Account of Ireland, Statistical and Political* in which he declared that the country was being ruled as 'a distant province' under a Union which was at best 'half-effected'. If Spain was Napoleon's ulcer, then Ireland would be Britain's running sore, and it would fester for much longer… "[502]

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[502] Cannadine, op. cit., pp. 15-19, 96-97.

36. NATIONALISM AND THE NATIONS: (7) THE UNITED STATES

"If America was founded as a nation by the Declaration of Independence in 1776," writes J.S. McClelland, "then it was founded by a political act. In this sense, America was founded the wrong way round when compared to almost all other nationalisms. The programme of all European nationalisms was to identify the nation in linguistic, cultural, religious and geographical terms, and then to claim its right to be a separate state on the basis of that separate identity. Not America. America was founded on the basis of an agreement to do politics in a particular way, the politics of the rights of man... "[503]

In this sense it was the creation of a state that created the American nation rather than the other way round. And indeed, what distinguished the Americans from the British whom they had considered up to 1776 to be their fellow countrymen was basically political: the Americans rejected "the King in Parliament" as their ultimate sovereign under God. Nevertheless, American nationalism did not come into being only during the American revolution of 1776-83. It was both a cause and an effect of that revolution. And while the Old World was tearing itself apart during the Napoleonic Wars, the newly independent power of the United States was sheltered from the turmoil not only by the vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean, but also by its own very distinctive understanding of itself and its role in the world.

The centralizing effect of the 1787 Constitution did much to turn the Thirteen British Colonies into one American nation, making it, according to Hugh Brogan, "a nationalistic document. As such it was far in advance of its time, which explains why Patrick Henry and many others were so alarmed. The idea of a national government meant to them simply alien selfish and oppressive power. After all, the last authority to insist on the American nationality had been George III, whose ministers had tried to make them live up to their responsibilities as citizens of the British Empire. The anti-Federalists need not have worried. American nationality was no imperial fiction, but it is not surprising that it should have done so. For, until the American Revolution, the nation-state was a very uncommon thing, only fully achieved, perhaps, in England. Otherwise the Atlantic world was made up of dynastic states and ramshackle republics like Holland or Poland: all were polities held together by the pressures of the international power competition, partly by custom, partly by an intricate and fragile net of religion, privilege, dialect and so on. Yet nationalities existed: France, Spain, Italy and Germany were more than geographical expressions.

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[503] McClelland, *A History of Western Political Thought,* London and New York: Routledge, 1996, p. 365.

America was newer than they, that was all. She too was defined by her borders, her language, her religion, her customs and her enemies…"[504]

She was defined, also, by the unique mode and direction of her *expansion*. For "a great change overtook the Americans in the years after 1789; a change as profound in its consequences as the Revolution itself. Previously their society had looked seawards. Every settlement in the New World had depended for success on finding functions in the great Atlantic economy of seaborne trade. Maritime links were to remain strong during the nineteenth century, but their controlling importance soon ended. Until 1815 the leaders of the republic were still defensively preoccupied with Europe; but more and more their fellow-citizens looked westwards. They felt the pull of the land."[505]

One of those whose gaze was turned westwards was President George Washington. In his Farewell Address of 1796 he admonished his countrymen to avoid allowing the newly independent United States to be dragged into the ongoing wars and strife that characterized Europe.

"The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations," he said, "is in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little political connection as possible. So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith. Here let us stop. Europe has a set of primary interests which to us have none, or a very remote relation. Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns. Hence, therefore, it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities. Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course."

"In other words," writes Protopresbyter James Thornton, "while friendship and trade with all countries is a good thing, the United States should maintain strict neutrality when it comes to Europe's seemingly everlasting quarrels since they involve nothing that concerns this country.

"President Thomas Jefferson spoke similarly when, in his 1801 inaugural address, he advocated 'peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.' That policy of friendship and trade with all, but alliances with none, remained the cornerstone of our country's foreign policy throughout the 19th century. Indeed, during that time there were occasional conflicts with other nations. But these involved the immediate interests, or the defense of the sovereignty, of the United States. Let us review major events in America's foreign policy during that period.

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[504] Brogan, *The Penguin History of the USA,* London: Penguin, 2019, p. 204.

[505] Brogan, op. cit., p. 220.

"An example of a policy that involved America's interests was the First Barbary War, which began in 1801. Pirates along the North African coast regularly attacked commercial vessels, including those of the United States, seizing them and either holding their captives for ransom or selling them into slavery. In exchange for tribute payments, the Pasha of Tripoli offered protection against these attacks. For some time, the United States paid the protection money, but when Tripoli demanded increased payments, the United States refused. A squadron of ships was sent to the Mediterranean and, when threatened by Tripolitanian pirates, engaged them in battle. A blockade was enforced against Tripoli, and both sea and land battles ensued. The climax came when a U.S.-led army crossed the desert from Alexandria to the city of Derna, which was captured. The Pasha, fearful of further encroachment by the U.S. forces, agreed to terms and signed a peace treaty that satisfied American concerns. A Second Barbary War was fought in 1815 when the Barbary States returned to their old practices. Two powerful American squadrons under Commodores William Bainbridge and Stephen Decatur entered the Mediterranean, attacking and capturing enemy ships. U.S. envoys demanded an end to piracy and threatened the North African rulers. The war ended with a new treaty that guaranteed American rights in the Mediterranean, granted compensation for American losses, and freed American and European captives.

"Another example of war to uphold American interests was the War of 1812, declared by the United States against Britain on June 18, 1812. Hostilities were brought about when Britain stopped American ships on the high seas to seize American seamen and impress, or force, them to serve in the Royal Navy. That was a direct assault on American sovereignty and an attack on the ability of the United States to sail the oceans of the world for purposes of peaceful commerce and communication unmolested. To make matters worse, Britain tried to foment an uprising by Indians on the American frontier. After more than two years of war, during which part of Maine was occupied and the U.S. capital burned, negotiations brought peace. The Treaty of Ghent was signed in December 1814, in which American grievances were satisfactorily addressed."[506]

As the nineteenth century progressed, however, another aspect of American foreign policy emerged…

Having been a colony that had won its independence from an imperialist power, the United States has always been officially an anti-imperialist State. So it is something of a surprise to discover that in the very year of the Declaration of Independence, leading American politicians were foreseeing the growth of an *empire.* An anti-imperialist empire, but an empire nevertheless…

Thus Ferguson writes: "When, in the draft Articles of Confederation of July, 1776, John Dickinson proposed setting western boundaries of the states, the idea was thrown out at the committee stage. To George Washington the United States was a 'nascent empire', later an 'infant empire'. Thomas Jefferson told James Madison he was 'persuaded no constitution was ever before as well calculated as ours for extending extensive empire and self-government.' The initial 'confederacy' of thirteen would be 'the nest from which all America, North and South [would] be peopled.' Indeed, Jefferson used his inaugural address in 1801 to observe that the short history of the United States had already furnished 'a new proof for the falsehood of Montesquieu's doctrine, that a republic can be preserved only in a small territory. The reverse is the truth.' Madison agreed; in the tenth of the *Federalist Papers* he forcefully argued for 'extend[ing] the sphere' to create a larger republic. Alexander Hamilton too referred to the United States – in the opening paragraph of the first of the *Federalist Papers* as 'in many respects the most interesting… empire… in the world.' He looked forward eagerly to the emergence of a 'great American system, superior to the control of all trans-Atlantic force of influence, and able to dictate the terms of connection between the Old and the New World.'"[507]

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[506] Thornton, "Partnering with Putin", *New American*, November 20, 2015, http://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/history/item/21998-partnering-with-putin.

Henry Kissinger explains how this quasi-imperialist element of American foreign policy arose: "The openness of American culture and its democratic principles made the United States a model and a refuge for millions. At the same time, the conviction that American principles were universal has introduced a challenging element into the international system because it implies that governments not practicing them are less than fully legitimate. This tenet – so engrained in American thinking that is only occasionally put forward as official policy – suggests that a significant portion of the world lives under a kind of unsatisfactory, probationary arrangement, and will one day be redeemed; in the meantime, their relations with the world's strongest power must have some latent adversarial element to them.

"These tensions have been inherent since the beginning of the American experience. For Thomas Jefferson, America was not only a great power in the making but an 'empire for liberty' – an ever-expanding force acting on behalf of all humanity to vindicate principles of good governance. As Jefferson wrote during his presidency: 'We feel that we are acting under obligations not confined to the limits of our society. It is impossible not to be sensible that we are acting for all mankind; that circumstances denied to others, but indulged to us, have imposed on us the duty of proving what is the degree of freedom and self-government in which a society may venture to leave its individual members.'

"So defined, the spread of the United States and the success of its endeavors was coterminous with the interests of humanity. Having doubled the size of the new country through his shrewd engineering of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, in retirement Jefferson 'candidly confess[ed]' to President Monroe, 'I have ever looked on Cuba as the most interesting addition which could ever be made to our system of States.' And to James Madison, Jefferson wrote, 'We should then have only to include the North [Canada] in our confederacy… and we should such an empire for liberty as she has never surveyed since the creation: & I am persuaded no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire & self government.' The empire envisaged by Jefferson and his colleagues differed, in their minds, from the European empires, which they considered based on the subjugation and oppression of foreign peoples. The empire imagined by Jefferson was in essence North American and conceived as the extension of liberty."[508]

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[507] Ferguson, *Empire: How Britain made the Modern World,* London: Penguin Books, 2003, p. 34.

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The "extension of liberty" perceived by Jefferson to be the essence of American sense of nationhood definitely did not extend to the North American Indians. In fact, they were the first to be oppressed by this "empire of liberty". In his first annual message to the U.S. Congress, in 1829, writes David Treuer, President Jackson "—a slave-owning real estate speculator already famous for burning down Creek settlements and hounding the survivors of the Creek War of 1813–14—called for the 'voluntary' migration of Native Americans to lands west of the Mississippi River. Six months later, in the spring of 1830, he signed the Indian Removal Act into law. This measure gave the president the authority to negotiate with Native American tribes for their fertile lands. The statute set off waves of litigation, mineral prospecting, and land speculation—not to mention waves of violence committed by non-native settlers against Native Americans.

"As the historian Claudio Saunt shows in his new book, *Unworthy Republic*, U.S. administrators and politicians gradually turned the voluntary removal into compulsory expulsion using a mix of legal and extralegal measures. State and federal militias hunted, killed, and often scalped Native Americans. Squatters and opportunists moved onto Native American lands both before and after tribes officially relocated. And the government gave banks and other lenders the power to force Native Americans into punitive sales and forfeitures, rendering tens of thousands of Native Americans homeless in their own lands. Thousands of Cherokees, Chickasaws, Choctaws, Creeks, Delawares, Hurons, Potawatomis, Sauks, Seminoles, and Senecas died in the process of removal. The myriad relocations and displacements are now commonly referred to by a single name: the Trail of Tears.

"By the end of this decade-long process, the federal government had spent $75 million to eject Native Americans from the eastern United States. That is the equivalent of over $1 trillion today, or $12.5 million for each Native American removed. In 1836, 40 percent of every dollar the U.S. federal government spent went toward enforcing the Indian Removal Act. In 2019, by contrast, only 17 percent of the federal budget went to national security and defense.

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[508] Kissinger, op. cit., pp. 235-237.

"But the economic returns on this massive project of ethnic cleansing and displacement were also considerable. In the 1830s—the decade of removal—the federal government made nearly $80 million selling Native American lands to private citizens, around $5 million more than it spent. And in the 1840s, those lands produced 160 million pounds of ginned cotton, 16 percent of the national crop. The real winners, then, were southern slaveholding landowners and their investors in New York…

"At the dawn of the nineteenth century, life for the roughly 100,000 Native Americans living east of the Mississippi was pretty good. It in no way resembled the savagery that European American settlers imagined. None of the scores of tribes in the eastern third of the country was made up of nomadic hunter-gatherers: they hadn't been for hundreds of years. Nearly all lived in settled villages; they farmed and gathered edibles in the woods and shellfish along the coast. The Cherokees had developed a syllabary and published their own newspaper. They had also begun to create their own form of representational democracy. Other tribes, such as the Chickasaws and the Choctaws, had adopted Christianity, built schools, and even selectively embraced slave ownership.

"But no matter how many European American practices Native Americans adopted, settlers remained suspicious of them and their ways of life. Isaac McCoy—a preacher who evangelized among the Miami, Odawa, and Potawatomi tribes of the Great Lakes—believed that 'the Indian problem' was one of proximity. McCoy concluded that, on the whole, Native Americans were hard to save. 'How grossly mistaken are those writers who would have the world believe that the Indians are quite a virtuous people,' he complained. This was even truer for the Native Americans who were constantly exposed to the derelict fringe of American society on the frontier. 'The great mass,' he wrote, 'have become more and more corrupt in morals, have sunk deeper and deeper in wretchedness, and have dwindled down to insignificance or to nothing.'

"McCoy imagined an 'asylum' to the west. He shared this idea with Lewis Cass, governor of the Michigan Territory. And Cass brought the notion with him to Washington when he became Jackson's secretary of war. Of course, the idea that there was an "Indian problem" was already widespread. Previous presidents and state governors had tried to solve it in myriad ways. George Washington, for instance, burned so many Native American villages in the Northeast that it earned him the Seneca name 'Town Destroyer.' And Thomas Jefferson proposed luring Native Americans into debt and obligating them to sell their lands in lieu of payment. But never before had the country's chief executive so explicitly endorsed segregationist removal policies on this scale.

"Power brokers and land speculators on the eastern seaboard knew that the best weapon they had to gain access to tribal lands was the states themselves, which felt that they could pass whatever legislation they wanted and subject everyone within their borders, including Native Americans, to their own laws. In 1832, the Supreme Court ruled that the individual states had no authority in Native American affairs. But Jackson felt strongly that the federal government should stay out of tribal matters. The drama of states' rights versus the federal government was staged at the expense of the Native American nations.

"The Indian Removal Act provided for an exchange of lands and fair compensation. What is more, the statute explicitly stated that its provisions should not be construed in a way that violated any existing treaties with Native American groups. But the act was vague. How would compensation work? Who exactly would be compensated, and how? How would land in the West be chosen? And how would the Native American migrants get there? In the end, the results were neither fair nor in accordance with existing treaties. State representatives and assorted business interests immediately seized on the law's ambiguity, formulating a disjointed and confusing array of methods that were, in Jackson's words, 'calculated to induce . . . a voluntary departure.' Saunt notes that 'the phrase perfectly captured the bad faith that underlay the policy.'

"In the meantime, the federal government assigned clerks to deal with the day-to-day logistics of the removal, appointed commissioners to negotiate land cessions, and mobilized thousands of soldiers to make the deportations a reality on the ground. Jackson even invited his friend General George Gibson to oversee the operation.

"By 1830, roughly 20,000 Native Americans remained in the eastern third of the continental United States.

"Some Native American tribes did leave voluntarily; many of them, however, were transported by private contractors who kept the cost of moving people as low as possible by denying them any medical care and by forcing the old and infirm to march on foot, resulting in untold suffering and death. Other Native Americans stayed despite orders to leave. In time, voluntary deportation became compulsory. Many Native Americans in the East were persecuted and killed as individuals. Consider, for instance, a nineteen-year-old Creek man who was captured by slave hunters. When they realized that the youth wasn't an escaped slave, and thus had no value, they shot him and scalped him.

Still others were hunted as groups. The Seminoles effectively fought off the U.S. government for years, suffering thousands of casualties in the course of the Second Seminole War.

"The Seminoles ultimately remained in their ancestral lands in central Florida. But they were the exception rather than the rule. By 1830, roughly 20,000 Native Americans remained in the eastern third of the continental United States. Many of them were engulfed by settlers and forced to live on mountainous and agriculturally unproductive land, separated from their kinfolk who had migrated, with their cultural and political systems in a shambles. Those who left were rarely better off. The land set aside for Native American settlement in what is now Oklahoma lacked water for irrigation; the terrain was rocky, and the soil thin. What is more, the boundaries were unclear and often overlapped. Many Native American people who ventured to the territory in advance of settlement noted that it was completely unsuitable for agriculture. The government, however, persisted in referring to it as 'fine country.'

"Meanwhile, landowners in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, and North and South Carolina quickly expanded the plantation system—and, by extension, chattel slavery—onto Native American lands. Saunt does an incredible job of linking northern financiers to southern slave owners and both to the process of Indian removal. Over the course of the 1830s, Saunt notes, 'the enslaved population in Alabama more than doubled to 253,000. By the end of the decade, nearly one out of four slaves worked on land that only a few years earlier had belonged to the Creeks.' This was largely financed by northern bankers—such as Joseph Beers, the president of the North American Trust and Banking Company—who skimmed handsome profits off the cotton planted, picked, and processed by the enslaved."[509]

The treatment of the American Indians at the hands of the Americans was much worse than, for example, the treatment of the Siberian natives by the Russians. (And the relatives of the Siberian natives in Alaska wept when the Russian flag was taken down for the last time when the United States bought Alaska in 1867.) "The indigenous population [of North America]," writes William Landes, "was uprooted repeatedly to make way for land-hungry newcomers. The Indians fought back, the more so as settler expansion entailed repeated violations of ostensibly sacred and eternal agreements – as long as the sun would shine and the waters run. The white man broke faith at will, while the natives were slaughtered... Here… technology made the difference. Repeating weapons, batch- or mass-produced with roughly interchangeable parts, multiplied the firepower of even small numbers and made Indian resistance hopeless."[510]

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[509] Treuer, "This Land is not your Land", *Foreign Affairs,* July/August, 2020.

Noam Chomsky has called the white man's slaughter of the American Indians "pure genocide… Current estimates are that north of the Rio Grande, there were about twelve to fifteen million Native Americans at the time Columbus landed, something like that. By the time Europeans reached the continental borders of the United States, there were about 200,000. Okay: mass genocide. Across the whole Western Hemisphere, the population decline was probably on the order of from a hundred million people to about five million. That's pretty serious stuff – it was horrifying right from the beginning in the early seventeenth century, then it got worse after the United States was established, and it just continued until finally the native populations were basically stuck away in little enclaves. The history of treaty violations by the United States is just grotesque: treaties with the Indian nations by law have a status the same as that of treaties among sovereign states, but throughout our history nobody ever paid the slightest attention to them – as soon as they wanted more land, you just forgot the treaty and robbed it; it's a very ugly and vicious history. Hitler in fact used the treatment of the Native Americans as a model, explicitly – he said, that's what we're going to do with the Jews… "[511]

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The empire of liberty was conceived as spreading south as well as west. In 1823, President James Monroe asserted his famous "Monroe doctrine", which Ferguson calls "the *fons et origo* of American grand strategy". It asserted "as a principle… that the American continents, by the free and independent condition which they have assumed and maintain, are henceforth not to be considered as subjects for future colonization by any European powers". The point of the Monroe doctrine, according to Thornton, "was to keep any European conflicts from spilling over into the Americas and, thereby, to avoid ensnaring the United States in Europe's disputes"[512]

> Almost inevitably, however, it came to be seen by some as giving America exclusive right to interfere anywhere in the western hemisphere where she considered her own interests to be at stake… Moreover, in excluding Spain from the Americas, it encouraged the growth of rebellions against Spanish power throughout the region. Nor was Spain the only other country affected: technically, America now extended her "protectorate" also over Russian and British possessions in North America.

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[510] Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations*, London: Abacus, 1999, p. 305. The subjugation of the Sioux is sympathetically portrayed in Kevin Costner's award-winning film, *Dances with Wolves* (1990).

[511] Chomsky, *Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky*, London: Vintage, 2003, p. 135.

[512] Thornton, op. cit.

"The doctrine," writes Peter Furtado, "became a major plank of anti-Communist policy, but it has also been interpreted as a statement of US imperialism in all but name."[513]

Thus "in 1836, the Republic of Texas came into being, having achieved independence from Mexico. It was subsequently recognized as a sovereign country by the United States and several European countries. In October 1845, a substantial majority of the citizens of Texas voted in favor of union with the United States. That union became official in February 1846. Unfortunately, there arose a dispute between the United States and Mexico as to the precise location of the western borders of Texas.

"Texas had always claimed all of the territory as far south as the Rio Grande, while Mexico insisted that the borders of Texas extended no further south than the Nueces River, a difference involving a huge swath of territory. Both the United States and Mexico sent in troops. In April 1846, a large Mexican force ambushed and overwhelmed a small American force of about 80 men, killing 11, wounding six, and capturing the remainder. President Polk stated that Mexico had invaded American territory and shed American blood, and asked Congress to declare war, which it did. As a result of the American victory in that war, the United States gained not only Texas, but also the territory that is now California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, most of Colorado, and a small portion of Wyoming. For that, the United States paid Mexico $15 million (the equivalent today of nearly $500 million), and the United States agreed to assume the debts owed by Mexico to American citizens, amounting to $3.25 million (the equivalent today of about $88.6 million). Later, in 1854, Mexico agreed to sell what today is southern Arizona and a small slice of land in southwest New Mexico to the United States for $10 million (the equivalent today of about $260 million). The land was needed so that a transcontinental railroad could be constructed along a southern route that avoided mountainous terrain."[514]

No European powers were involved in this essentially colonial war, and none would have been allowed in. For, as Henry Kissinger writes: "In the United States, the Monroe Doctrine was interpreted as the extension of the War of Independence, sheltering the Western Hemisphere from the operation of the European balance of power. No Latin American countries were consulted (not least because few existed at the time). As the frontiers of the nation crept across the continent, the expansion of America was seen as the operation of a kind of law of nature. When the United States practiced what elsewhere was defined as imperialism, Americans gave it another name: 'the fulfilment of our manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions.' The acquisition of vast tracts of territory was treated as a commercial transaction in the purchase of the

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[513] Furtado, *History Day by Day*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2019, p. 420.
[514] Thornton, op. cit.

Louisiana Territory from France and as the inevitable consequence of this Manifest Destiny in the case of Mexico. It was not until the close of the nineteenth century in the Spanish-American War of 1898, that the United States engaged in full-scale hostilities with another major power…

"The success of the United States, would serve as a standing rebuke to all other forms of government, ushering in a future democratic age. A great, free union, divinely sanctioned and towering above all other states, would spread its principles throughout the Western Hemisphere – a power destined to become greater in scope and in moral purpose than any previous human endeavour: 'We are the nation of human progress, and who will, what can, set limits to our onward march? Providence is with us, and no earthly power can. The United States was thus not simply a country but an engine of God's plan and the epitome of world order.

"In 1845, when American westward expansion embroiled the country in a dispute with Britain over the Oregon Territory and with Mexico over the Republic of Texas (which had seceded from Mexico and declared its intent to join the United States), the magazine concluded that the annexation of Texas was a defensive measure against the foes of liberty. The author reasoned that 'California will probably, next fall away' from Mexico, and an American sweep north into Canada would likely follow. The continental force of America, he reasoned, would eventually render Europe's balance of power inconsequential by its sheer countervailing weight. Indeed the author of the *Democratic Review* article foresaw a day, one hundred years hence – that is, 1945 – when the United States would outweigh even a unified, hostile Europe: 'Though they should cast into the opposite scale all the bayonets and cannons, not only of France and England, but of Europe entire, how would it kick the beam against the simple, solid weight of the two hundred and fifty, or three hundred million – and American millions – destined to gather beneath the flutter of the stripes and stars, in the fast hastening year of the Lord 1945!'

"This is, in fact, what transpired (except that the Canadian border was peacefully demarcated, and England was not part of a hostile Europe in 1945, but rather an ally). Bombastic and prophetic, the vision of America transcending and counterbalancing the harsh doctrines of the Old World would inspire a nation – often while being largely ignored elsewhere or prompting consternation – and reshape the course of history…"[515]

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The Russian poet Alexander Pushkin had, like Hegel, been attracted at first to the United States. However, after reading a review of a book on the North American Indians, he changed his mind: "My respect for this new people and its constitution, the fruit of the newest enlightenment," he wrote, "has been severely shaken. With amazement we have seen democracy in its disgusting cynicism, its cruel prejudices, its intolerable tyranny…"[516]

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[515] Kissinger, *World Order,* London: Penguin, 2015, pp. 240, 243-244.

Pushkin's fellow writer, Nikolai Gogol, was similarly unenthusiastic, preferring his native "despotism": "A state without an absolute monarch is an orchestra without a conductor…"[517]

Nevertheless, while America was fulfilling her "Manifest Destiny" and calling as the "empire of liberty" by conquering millions to the west and south of her original homeland, and even in that original homeland itself, she remained a land of opportunity, even a dream, for many millions of future immigrants. The question was: in fleeing the passions and nationalisms of "Old Europe" for the New World would the immigrants truly find a newness of life?…

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[516] Pushkin, *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), 1949, vol. 12.

[517] Gogol, *Selected Passages from My Correspondence with My Friends* (1847), in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 552.

37. CLASSICAL ROMANTICISM: GOETHE AND BEETHOVEN

Probably the most famous artists of the early Romantic period were the poet Goethe and the composer Beethoven. And yet they were not typical romantics. They displayed a mixture of Romantic passion and Classical restraint that raised their work to a pinnacle from which both the serenity of the Classical past and the madness of the Romantic future was clearly visible.

Goethe was perhaps the first romantic. His novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774), was the world's first "best-seller"; its tale of unrequited love and suicide created a taste for passion, as it were, that has never since departed from the subconscious of western civilization.

"What set Goethe's book apart from other such novels was its expression of unbridled longing for a joy beyond possibility, its sense of defiant rebellion against authority, and of principal importance, its total subjectivity: qualities that trail-blazed the Romantic movement."[518]

But shortly after *Werther* Goethe made his famous trip to Italy, which imbued him with such a love of the Classics as to leave a permanent imprint on his art and his beliefs. Of course, he was not alone in this attraction of the Romantics to what appeared to be their artistic opposites. Byron loved Greek classicism and died in the liberation of Greece. And John Keats wrote his "Ode on a Grecian Urn" which summed up that glimpse of eternity in time that so many English-speaking poets discerned in Greek art:

When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou sayst,
"Beauty is truth, truth beauty," – that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

As for Goethe, he was not only the first romantic but also the author of "Weimar classicism", a period in his art that extended well into the nineteenth century.

It was probably his classical tastes that enabled Goethe to escape that terrible disease of the early Romantic generation – the worship of the French revolution. He correctly called the French revolution "the most dreadful of all events", and remained firmly committed to the old regime's aristocratic and hierarchical model of politics. There may have been personal reasons for this: since 1775 he had been a leading figure at the court of the Duke of Saxe-Weimar-Eisenach, and so had much to lose from the revolution. Moreover, he had been present at the battle of Valmy in 1792, when the revolution won its first victory over the Germans; he had witnessed the siege of Mainz, and the barbarism of Napoleon's troops when they ransacked his house in Weimar in 1806…

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[518] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe.

However, while not fooled by the revolution, Goethe was fooled by its nemesis and apotheosis, Napoleon. Mistakenly thinking that he was the reverser rather than the continuer of the revolution, "he persisted," as Professor Ritchie Robertson writes, "in admiring Napoleon, the invader of Germany and conqueror of Prussia, whom patriots denounced as a devil risen from hell. For him, Napoleon was the hero who had defeated the French Revolution and replaced anarchy with a social order which Goethe hoped would prove permanent. More than that, Napoleon was a superhuman figure, 'the highest phenomenon that was possible in history'. 'His life was the striding of a demi-god from battle to battle and from victory to victory', Goethe later said to Eckermann (11 March 1828). Goethe's meeting with Napoleon [at Napoleon's request] at Erfurt on 2 October 1808, and again in Weimar on 6 October, was one of the supreme moments of his life. Napoleon awarded him the Légion d'Honneur, which he proudly wore at every opportunity. Hence he deeply disliked the often furious German nationalism that grew up during Napoleon's occupation, triumphed over his downfall, and would flourish for the next century and a half."[519]

Goethe showed his affinities with the rationalist eighteenth century rather than the romantic nineteenth also in his aversion to nationalism. Again, there may have been personal motives for that. A man who in his literary career had been deeply influenced by foreign writers, from the English Shakespeare to the Greek Euripides to the Persian Hajiz, and spent much of his time translating them, was hardly likely to think that all truth and beauty was in one nation.

"Although often requested to write poems arousing nationalist passions, Goethe would always decline. In old age, he explained why this was so to Eckermann: 'How could I write songs of hatred when I felt no hate? And, between ourselves, I never hated the French, although I thanked God when we were rid of them. How could I, to whom the only significant things are civilization [*Kultur*] and barbarism, hate a nation which is among the most cultivated in the world, and to which I owe a great part of my own culture? In any case this business of hatred between nations is a curious thing. You will always find it more powerful and barbarous on the lowest levels of civilization. But there exists a level at which it wholly disappears, and where one stands, so to speak, above the nations, and feels the weal or woe of a neighboring people as though it were one's own.'"[520]

Goethe's attitude to religion was similarly rationalist. He was not anti-religious: he objected to Voltaire's mockery of religion, his works contain sympathetic portrayals of religious people, and he counted sincere Christians among his friends. Moreover, he saw through the deceptions of rationalism:

He hasn't changed, your little god on earth –

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[519] Robertson, *Goethe: A Very Short Introduction,* Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 81-82.

[520] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe.

He's still peculiar as the day you gave him birth.
He'd live a better life, at least,
If you'd not given him a glimpse of heaven's light.
He calls it reason – which gives him the right
To be more bestial than any beast.[521]

But he was too much of an Enlightenment man to believe in the literal truth of Christian dogma; he particularly disliked the doctrine of original sin, and didn't believe in miracles.

And he was an ecumenist, who believed in no institutional religion. As Robertson explains, his real religion was probably a kind of nature-worship. "He told Lavater firmly: 'You consider the Gospel the most divine truth; even a loud voice from heaven wouldn't convince me that water burns and fire puts it out, that a woman bears a child without a man, or that a man can rise from the dead; instead, I consider those beliefs to be blasphemies against the great God and his revelation in nature.' He thought it self-evident that there was a God who was manifested in the order of nature. Natural religion therefore did not require any effort of faith; it was only particular religions that did so. Natural religion sprang from 'the dialogue in our bosom with nature'; it depended on feeling and could not be implanted by rational argument. Hence what Faust professes to Gretchen is natural religion."[522]

One aspect of Goethe's private religion may have been a product of his interest in Eastern religion. This was a kind of amorality, an anticipation of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*: a belief that good and evil went together in the world like Yin and Yan, as two aspects of one reality. As he put it: nature was "an organ on which our Lord plays and the Devil treads the bellows".

Thus according to Goethe, writes Ellendea Proffer, "at the heart of everything lies a contradiction – attraction and repulsion, creation and destruction – that men see as good and evil, heaven and hell. Goethe felt that moral concepts were really only one facet of the whole, a whole in which immorality and amorality are at least equally represented. The main thing is activity – the surge of life, an everlasting repetition that never progresses, good never really does triumph over evil, but the movement in itself is what is important. All these contradictions are inseparable from one another and from God Himself."[523]

In accordance with his views on morality, Goethe paid little attention to the fairly strict contemporary views on sexual life, and had a string of affairs. "Many of Goethe's works, especially *Faust*, the *Roman Elegies*, and the *Venetian Epigrams*, depict erotic passions and acts. For instance, in *Faust*, the first use of Faust's power after signing a contract with the devil is to seduce a teenage girl. Some of the *Venetian Epigrams* were held back from publication due to their sexual content. Goethe clearly saw human sexuality as a topic worthy of poetic and artistic depiction, an idea that was uncommon in a time when the private nature of sexuality was rigorously normative. Still worse, Goethe was a pederast: 'I like boys a lot, but the girls are even nicer. If I tire of her as a girl, she'll play the boy for me as well'. Goethe also defended pederasty: 'Pederasty is as old as humanity itself, and one can therefore say that it is natural, that it resides in nature, even if it proceeds against nature. What culture has won from nature will not be surrendered or given up at any price.'"[524]

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[521] Goethe, *Faust*, Prologue in Heaven.
[522] Robertson, op. cit., pp. 105-106.
[523] Proffer, "Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita:* Genre and Motif", in Laura Weeks (ed.), *The Master and Margarita: A Critical Companion,* Northwestern University Press, 1996, pp. 106-107.

An important aspect of Romanticism was its subtle devaluation of science – the god of the Enlightenment – by comparison with art. Goethe was a true Romantic in this respect. For, though a scientist as well as a poet, he approached his science in a distinctly non-empirical way, fearing an excessively abstract approach to nature.

As Professor Robertson writes, "Given his fear of abstraction, Goethe was inevitably hostile to the most successful model of scientific research in his time: the conception of the universe as a great machine, operating by regular laws, and capable of being described in quantitative and mathematical terms. Goethe knew little of mathematics: in 1786 he tried to learn algebra, with limited success. He says that mathematics is all very well in its place, dealing with those restricted areas where exactitude is possible, but should abandon its claim to 'universal monarchy'. The study of nature needs to emancipate itself from mathematics and 'seek with all loving, reverent, devout energies to penetrate nature and its holy life'. Although he occasionally used a microscope to examine micro-organisms, and enjoyed looking at the moon through a telescope, Goethe generally deplored the use of instruments such as microscopes, on the grounds that they distorted the natural relation between the observer and the world.

"Despite rejecting mathematical abstraction, Goethe did not confine himself to the empirical study of phenomena. His cogently criticized the empirical method advocated early in the 17th century by Francis Bacon and practiced after 1660 by the Royal Society in London. Empirical studies need to be guided by principles, otherwise they will just lead to millions of isolated and insignificant facts. The Royal Society, though claiming to study nature without preconceptions, in fact assumed that the universe was really a great machine. The investigator, in Goethe's view, needed to remember that there were no raw facts, independent of the viewer's preconceptions.

"However, when Goethe writes, 'The supreme goal would be to grasp that everything factual is already theory,' he does not mean 'theory' in any recognizable present-day sense. He rejects 'theory' in the sense of mathematical abstraction. Nor has he any interest in causal explanations for phenomena. After all, since everything in nature is interrelated, a causal account merely privileges *one* set of relationships, a historical one, at the expense of innumerable others. Often he uses the word 'theory' in the original sense of Greek *theoria*, meaning 'looking'… Ultimately all you can do with phenomena is contemplate them. There is nothing behind them, nothing to be explained. The aphorism just quoted continues: 'The blue of the sky reveals to us the basic law of chromatics. Do not look for anything behind the phenomena: they themselves are the doctrine'. Even to express phenomena in words requires caution, since language is just another phenomenon; we must use language with self-awareness and irony if we are not to fall into mere abstraction."[525]

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[524] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Wolfgang_von_Goethe.

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Combining the roles of statesman, poet, scientist and philosopher, Goethe was the nineteenth-century equivalent of the Renaissance man and represented, perhaps better than anybody else, the paradoxes of western civilization and the essence of its apostasy. We can understand this better if we study his most famous and influential work, *Faust*. "*Faust Part One* takes place in multiple settings, the first of which is Heaven. The demon Mephistopheles makes a bet with God: he says that he can lure God's favourite human being (Faust), who is striving to learn everything that can be known, away from righteous pursuits. The next scene takes place in Faust's study where Faust, despairing at the vanity of scientific, humanitarian and religious learning, turns to magic for the showering of infinite knowledge. He suspects, however, that his attempts are failing. Frustrated, he ponders suicide, but rejects it as he hears the echo of nearby Easter celebrations begin. He goes for a walk with his assistant Wagner and is followed home by a stray poodle (the term then meant a medium-to-big-size dog, similar to a sheep dog).

"In Faust's study, the poodle transforms into Mephistopheles. Faust makes an arrangement with him: Mephistopheles will do everything that Faust wants while he is here on Earth, and in exchange Faust will serve the Devil in Hell. Faust's arrangement is that if he is pleased enough with anything Mephistopheles gives him that he wants to stay in that moment forever, then he will die in that moment.

"When Mephistopheles tells Faust to sign the pact with blood, Faust complains that Mephistopheles does not trust Faust's word of honor. In the end, Mephistopheles wins the argument and Faust signs the contract with a drop of his own blood. Faust has a few excursions and then meets Margaret (also known as Gretchen). He is attracted to her and with jewellery and with help from a neighbor, Martha, Mephistopheles draws Gretchen into Faust's arms. With Mephistopheles' aid, Faust seduces Gretchen. Gretchen's mother dies from a sleeping potion, administered by Gretchen to obtain privacy so that Faust could visit her. Gretchen discovers she is pregnant. Gretchen's brother condemns Faust, challenges him and falls dead at the hands of Faust and Mephistopheles. Gretchen drowns her illegitimate child and is convicted of the murder. Faust tries to save Gretchen from death by attempting to free her from prison. Finding that she refuses to escape, Faust and Mephistopheles flee the dungeon, while voices from Heaven announce that Gretchen shall be saved – '*Sie ist gerettet*' – this differs from the harsher ending of *Urfaust* [the earliest draft of *Faust*] – '*Sie ist gerichtet!*' – 'she is condemned.'

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[525] Robertson, *Goethe: A Very Short Introduction,* Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 29-30.

"Rich in classical allusion, in Part Two the romantic story of the first Faust is forgotten, and Faust wakes in a field of fairies to initiate a new cycle of adventures and purpose. The piece consists of five acts (relatively isolated episodes) each representing a different theme. Ultimately, Faust goes to Heaven, for he loses only half of the bet. Angels, who arrive as messengers of divine mercy, declare at the end of Act V: 'He who strives on and lives to strive/ Can earn redemption still' (V, 11936–7)."

It is this quality of *restless striving* that is so characteristic of what we may call Faustian man, *Homo Occidentalis*. As Mephistopheles puts it:

He serves you [God] in a very curious way indeed.
It isn't earthly nourishment he seems to need;
His fevered mind is in a constant ferment.
Half-conscious of his folly, in his pride
On all the joys of earth he wants to feed,
And pluck from heaven the very brightest star.
He searches high and low, and yet however far
He roams, his restless heart remains dissatisfied. (ll. 300-307)

Again, Faust himself says:

Listen: it's not on happiness I'm bent.
I want a frenzied round of agonizing joy,
Of loving hate, of stimulating discontent.
Learning and knowledge now I leave behind;
I shall not flinch from suffering or despair,
And in my inners self I wish to share
The whole experience of mankind,
To seek its heights, its depths, to know
Within my heart its joys and all its woe,
Identify myself with other men and blend
My life with theirs, and like them perish in the end. (ll.1765-1775)

Of course, this lust for experience, "the whole experience of mankind", was a typically Romantic attitude. But it goes back well before the Romantic period to the Renaissance, when this lust was first revealed in Western culture. Only Goethe stands above this lust - or pretends to. He sees it as a temptation posed by the devil himself, which leads inexorably to disaster. It can be construed as a striving of man for God – but a true meeting never takes place, just as God and Adam in Michelangelo's famous fresco in the Sistine Chapel stretch out their hands towards each other but never quite meet. For

Reason and knowledge, the highest powers of mankind,
You have rejected, to oblivion consigned.
Now let the Prince of lies confuse you,
With magic spells and fantasies delude you –
And I will have you then once and for all.
For fate has given him a mind
So restless, so impetuous, so unconfined
That his impatient spirit, like a waterfall,
Pours headlong over all the pleasures life can give.
I'll plunge him into such distraction, he will live
A life so futile, so banal and trite,
He'll flap and flutter like a bird stuck tight.
He is unsatiable, and so I'll tantalize
Him, dangle food and drink before his greedy eyes.
In vain he'll beg relief on bended knee,
And even if he hadn't pledged himself to me,
He'd still be damned for all eternity! (ll. 1851-1867)

So *Faust* is a parable of the fall of man, employing many religious themes, but from the point of view of a sceptic. Just as Adam strove for deification through tasting of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so Western, Faustian man strives for knowledge (experience) and power. To that end he embraces science, magic, art and the senses – but betrays his true love. Gretchen is redeemed for her simple faith, refusing to escape from prison with aid of the devil. But the sceptic Faust, who escapes with Mephistopheles, should be damned. He is not, because *Faust* has an inauthentic sequel in which Faust is saved in spite of his bargain with the devil.

Thus Goethe is moving away from authentic tragedy. For, as Robertson writes, "after the intense agony of the 'Prison' scene, an unspecified time passes, and at the beginning of Part II we find Faust lying on an Alpine meadow, attended by charming spirits who pity his distress and sing him to sleep. When he wakes the next morning, Faust is refreshed and ready to continue his career, thanks to the healing power of nature. Now this may seem unfair, indeed morally offensive. After all, Faust is responsible for Gretchen's misery and death. One might feel that he should be punished. However, it seems that he has been punished enough by the agony of confronting Gretchen in prison. Thereafter his moral failure is treated as a medical problem. Not atonement, but healing, is prescribed. A spectacular act of atonement would do no good: it wouldn't bring Gretchen back to life, and it would only prevent Faust from achieving his potential and, perhaps, doing more good in the world. Goethe is here moving beyond catharsis and beyond tragedy."[526]

Tragically, European man followed the path Goethe's *Faust* had laid out. In striving to "achieve his potential" he lost his soul - and soulmate. Henceforth there would be no tragedies with a Divine, let alone a Christian dimension. The tragic heroes of later European *Kultur* would be "redeemed" by suffering and striving alone – in other words, by works, not by faith. Their justification would be the same as Faust's: striving, which would give a quality of dynamism to Western civilization, but never of peace. At most, "redemption" would be achieved by the death of all the guilty, including the hero, as in the final scene of *Hamlet* or the battlefields of World War I – a most unsatisfactory ending, providing no real catharsis and certainly no joy. Like the spires of the medieval Gothic cathedrals, - interest in which, not coincidentally, Goethe revived in his early essay, "On German Architecture" (1772), - Faustian man strives always upwards and outwards, knowing that the Kingdom of heaven is no longer within him... This in contrast to the curves and domes of Eastern Orthodox architecture, which as it were keep the Kingdom *inside* the building. No striving, no achievement of potential, is needed there, only obedience in love...

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Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) greatly admired Goethe, but he was a very different man whose legacy pointed in a very different direction. What he shared with Goethe was his being a Classical Romantic. His classicism came with his education: he was, after all, the pupil of Haydn and Mozart, the greatest of the classical composers; and his "Early Period" (roughly 1795-1802) could best be characterized as "Haydnesque" (especially the First Symphony) with some Mozartean interludes (such as the Second Piano Concerto). Only in his piano works could something radically new be detected even at this early stage (for example, in the famous "Pathétique" and "Moonlight" sonatas).

One event appears to have triggered the transition to his earth-shaking "Middle Period" (roughly 1803-1813). This was the discovery that he was going deaf – a terrible affliction especially for a composer, which he movingly recorded in his famous "Heiligenstadt Testament" (1802). Then, with the writing of his "Eroica" symphony in 1803 he embarked upon that colossal series of masterpieces that smashed the conventions established by Haydn and Mozart, a period, writes Harvey Sachs, "leaves one with a sense of wonder bordering on disbelief: the Third ('Eroica'), Fourth, Fifth, Sixth ('Pastoral'), Seventh and Eighth symphonies; *Leonora* (the name he gave to the first and second versions of his only opera); the Fourth and Fifth ('Emperor') piano concertos; the Violin and Triple concertos; the 'Waldstein', 'Appassionata' and 'Les Adieux' piano sonatas; the Ninth ('Kreutzer') and Tenth (G Major) violin sonatas; the Third Cello Sonata, op. 69; the String Quarters, op. 59 nos. 1 to 3 ('Razumovsky'), and op. 74 ('Harp'); the 'Ghost' and 'Archduke' trios for piano, violin and cello; the *Coriolan, Egmont* and three *Leonore* overtures; the Choral Fantasy for piano, orchestra, and chorus; and the Mass in C Major. Probably only Mozart and Schubert, in the last ten years of their brief lives, produced in a single decade as much that is still performed frequently all over the world as Beethoven between 1803 and 1813. During the same period, Hegel wrote his University of Jena lectures, later published as *Phänomenologie des Geistes (Phenomenology of the Spirit* or *of the Mind),* which were crucial to establishing his reputation as a philosopher; Goethe gave the world *Faust,* Part One; Schiller produced *Wilhelm Tell*; and Blake's *Milton* and the first two cantos of Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* appeared. But none of these works – not even *Faust* – occupied as much space in its specific area as Beethoven's works of that decade have occupied in theirs.

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[526] Robertson, op. cit., pp. 98-98.

"These were the works that gave birth to the familiar image of Beethoven as a tempestuous genius who shook his fist at fate and, Jove-like, loosed musical lightning bolts that welded the rationalistic Enlightenment ideals of the just-ended eighteenth century, in which he had spent roughly the first half of his life, to the stormy Romantic individualism of the newborn nineteenth. By the time he reached middle age, his startling originality had made him a European musical icon, and his much-discussed intransigeance and eccentricity had become a symbol of untrammeled artistic freedom."[527]

If Beethoven's Early Period showed him as a Classical artist, albeit a highly unusual and talented one, in the Middle Period he was predominantly the Romantic artist – indeed, the prototypical Romantic. Apart from the features mentioned by Sachs, we may point to his extremely high estimate of the role of art in general and music in particular, which was so typical of the romantics. "Music," he said, "is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy. Music is the electrical soil in which the spirit lives, thinks and invents."

For the romantics, as we have seen, the artistic genius as a God-seer or demi-god, lighting the path through the storm and stress and darkness of earthly life to the Divine Light of Heaven, was a familiar theme. We find the same idea in Goethe, who wrote: "As a temporal gospel, true poetry announces itself by knowing how to liberate us, through internal serenity and external pleasure, from the earthly burdens that weigh us down. Like a balloon, it lifts us and the ballast that we carry, into higher regions, leaving earth's tangled paths lying spread out before us in a bird's-eye view."

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[527] Sachs, *The Ninth: Beethoven and the World in 1924,* London: Faber & Faber, 2010, pp. 46-47.

But even at the height of his most Romantic, Middle Period, Beethoven displays important differences from Goethe. Thus the latter's amoralism with starkly at odds with Beethoven's stern moralism. For if for Goethe sin was not natural and inevitable, and therefore not really sinful, Beethoven was quite different. Thus his struggle to obtain the wardship of his nephew Karl because of the immoral behaviour of Karl's mother was a struggle that lasted many years and cost him a great deal both financially and emotionally. Again, he was appalled by the popularity of the "frivolous" Rossini's operas; for him, music was too intensely serious and important to be used in such a way – the later Romantic attitude of "art for art's sake" was profoundly foreign to him. Again, his only venture into opera scrupulously avoided the sensuality and illicit love of almost all great operas from Monteverdi's *L'Incoronazione di Poppaea* to Puccini's *La Bohème*, being a hymn to marital *fidelity*.

Beethoven was different also in his more conventional but at the same time more authentic, religiosity. Sachs argues, on the contrary, that Beethoven shared the ideas expressed in "Benjamin Constant's treatise, *De la religion,* in which the French writer and statesman essentially equated true religion with spirituality – a quality natural to all human beings, he said – whereas formal, imposed religion is inimical to the human spirit. 'Religion has been disfigured,' Constant wrote. 'Man has been pursued right to his last place of asylum, to this intimate sanctuary of his existence. Persecution provokes rebellion… There is a principle in us that becomes indignant at every intellectual fetter. This principle can be whipped into a furor; it can be the cause of many a crime; but it is connected to everything that is noble in our nature. Surely Constant's anti-dogmatic, anti-Establishment, nondoctrinaire, informal, open-minded, and indeed Romantic approach to spirituality is closely linked to Beethoven's beliefs…"[528]

Beethoven was not unaffected by the liberal currents of his time. Thus when Napoleon betrayed the revolution by crowning himself emperor, Beethoven tore out the title-page of his *Eroica* symphony, which had been dedicated to him, and said: "So he too is nothing but a man. Now he also will trample all human rights underfoot, and only pander to his own ambition; he will place himself above everyone else and become a tyrant…"[529]

However, in his Late Period Beethoven enters a deeply religious phase of his career, which, while still revolutionary, cannot easily be described in such terms. The critical transition from the Middle to the Late Period in Beethoven's music – the relatively fallow years 1813-1823 – went in parallel with, and may well have been influenced by, an important political transition: the defeat of Napoleon and the Revolution and the return of Divine right monarchy in the form of the Bourbon Kings Louis XVIII and Charles X. Unlike so many romantic artists of the period, Beethoven appears to have been in no way upset by this turn of events, and gladly composed two anti-revolutionary pieces ("The Glorious Moment" and "Wellington's Victory") that he performed before all the crowned heads of Europe at the Congress of Vienna in November, 1814. It would be going beyond the evidence we have to say that Beethoven the lover of freedom, who had removed Napoleon from the dedication of his *Eroica* symphony when he became Emperor because of his despotic tendencies, had now repented of his earlier liberalism and become a reactionary. Nevertheless, in his Late Period works there is a marked return to classicism, if not in form, at any rate in spirit, that seems to parallel the return to older forms of government in Europe as a whole. Only this is a revolutionary, new form of classicism which appears to combine classicism with romanticism in a unique – and uniquely religious – mixture.

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[528] Sachs, op. cit., p. 131.

[529] Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 531.

Beethoven's Last Period begins with the *Missa Solemnis,* a setting of the Catholic Mass. Elements in the musical style hark back to earlier, more Christian ages, such as the Bachian fugues[530]; and Donald Tovey remarks that "Not even Bach or Handel can show a greater sense of space and of sonority. There is no earlier choral writing that comes so near to recovering some of the lost secrets of the style of Palestrina. There is no choral and no orchestral writing, earlier or later, that shows a more thrilling sense of the individual colour of every chord, every position, and every doubled third or discord."

More important, however, than these formal characteristics is the *content*. Not since the stupendous *Kyrie* of Bach's B Minor Mass had the West produced a work of such unequivocally *sincere faith*. And if sincere, then it cannot, of course, be described as undogmatic, especially in the *Credo*. It is significant that the work was first performed in 1824 in Orthodox St. Petersburg, not Catholic Vienna, under the patronage of Prince Nikolai Golitsyn, who commissioned many of his late sonatas and string quartets.

In the same year of 1824 Beethoven published his most famous work, the Ninth Symphony. The first three movements constitute as it were a summing up of his Middle Period – the tragic drama in the first movement, the colossal energy in the second, the profound lyricism in the third. But in the fourth, after the orchestra repeats the beginning of each of the first three movements, these are rejected in turn in order to make way for a new theme, the famous "Joy" melody that has become the "national anthem" of the European Union. This is followed by the soloists and chorus singing Schiller's *Ode to Joy* – evidently this is the

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[530] The use of this "old-fashioned" stylistic form is characteristic of Beethoven's late works, as in the "Hammerclavier" piano sonata or the *Grosse Fuge* for strings.

"new word" by which Beethoven means to characterize his new music, the music of his Late Period.

All creatures drink Joy
At Nature's breast;
All the good, all the bad
Follow her rose-bedecked trail.

We might be tempted at first to think that the Joy in question is some sort of nature-worship. But Beethoven's God is not the same as Goethe's pantheist deity. First of all, the passage ends with the word "God" thundered out at length in a huge *fortissimo*. And secondly, this God is clearly a personal God, as both the words and the "solemn, even liturgical" music, ending in a mysterious *pianissimo,*[531] indicate:

Be embraced, you millions!
By this kiss for the whole world!
Brothers, a loving Father must live
Above the canopy of the stars.

So for Beethoven the message is that joy is possible for all, but not in the worship of nationalist-imperialist heroes such as Napoleon, but in a truly universalist union under the one, personal and transcendent God; the saviour is not nature, as Goethe thought, but the Creator of nature. Could Beethoven's 1814 meeting with Tsar Alexander, who had a very similar vision of pan-European unity under the one Christian God, have influenced him? Perhaps; and it is indeed intriguing that Beethoven's encounter with the Tsar and his relationship with his devoted Russian patrons (Count Razumovsky and Prince Nikolai Golitsyn) took place at this time.

It was a unique and decisive moment in European history, when the Orthodox East stretched out its hand to the Catholic/Protestant West, and the White Tsar entered Berlin and Vienna - even godless Paris and London. But the decision went the wrong way: intrigued, and briefly grateful to their "barbarian" liberators, the Europeans nevertheless continued along their Faustian path. "The Gendarme of Europe" continued to defend them against the real barbarians – but, a generation later, there was none of the former curiosity or gratitude...

As for Beethoven, increasingly isolated from society, sick, misunderstood and lonely, he entered deep within himself, producing some of the most profoundly poignant and original works of Western music. (His great contemporary, Schubert, asked that Beethoven's String Quartet in C sharp minor, opus 131, be played at his deathbed.) Critics have called these works "mystical", but of course there can be no true mysticism where there is not the mystery of the true faith and the True Church. Nevertheless, we may be confident that Beethoven rejected the path of Faustian man; for his heart thirsted, not for the ephemeral goals of the Faustian dream, but for the living God…

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[531] Sachs, op. cit., pp. 158, 159.

38. REVOLUTIONARY ROMANTICISM

The Age of Revolution was also the Age of Romanticism, and the one is incomprehensible without the other. Of course, political and religious change has always been reflected in artistic change. But the relationship is closer than usual at this point in history. The image of the Decembrist revolutionary Ryleev ascending the scaffold with a volume of Byron in his hand encapsulates that relationship: the revolutionaries were impelled to their acts of violence by their visionary Romanticism. Their love of political freedom was seen as being born from the love of freedom expressed in their Romantic art; the *theoria* of the one engendered the *praxis* of the other.

The revolution in politics was closely linked to the revolution in art. "During the 1820s," writes Sir Richard Evans, in spite of the conservative reaction imposed by the Congress of Vienna in 1815, "writers and thinkers began to move towards a more liberal point of view. Victor Hugo, who in 1824 declared that literature should be 'the expression of a religious and monarchical society', was by 1830 propounding the principle that 'Romanticism, taken as a whole, is only liberalism in literature… Freedom in art and liberty in society are the twin goals to which all consistent and logical thinkers should march in step.' In 1827 the French art critic August Jal (1795-1873) declared that Romanticism was 'the echo of the cannot shot of 1789', and as if to prove his point, Eugène Delacroix produced in 1830 what is probably the most famous representation of revolution in any artwork, *Liberty Leading the People.* For many Romantic poets and writers, the Greek uprising was a turning point, symbolized by Byron's death at Missolonghi. The opera that launched the Belgian revolution in 1830 was only one example of a new trend, begun in Italy, of portraying ancient struggles for liberty in words and music in such a way that their contemporary relevance was unmistakeable."[532]

The connection between the revolution and romanticism became especially clear and strong during the July Days of the 1830 revolution, as Adam Zamoyski notes: "'People and poets are marching together,' wrote the French critic Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve in 1830. 'Art is henceforth on a popular footing, in the arena with the masses.' There was something in this. Never before or since had poetry been so widely and so urgently read, so taken to heart and so closely studied for hidden meaning. And it was not only in search of aesthetic or emotional uplift that people did so, for the poet had assumed a new role over the past two decades. Art was no longer an amenity but a great truth that had to be revealed to mankind, and the artist was one who had been called to interpret this truth, a kind of seer. In Russia, Pushkin solemnly declared the poet's status as a prophet uttering the burning words of truth. The American Ralph Waldo Emerson saw poets as 'liberating gods' because they had achieved freedom themselves, and could therefore free others. The pianist and composer Franz Liszt wanted to recapture the 'political, philosophical and religious power' that he believed music had in ancient times. William Blake claimed that Jesus and his disciples were all artists, and that he himself was following Jesus through his art. 'God was, perhaps only the first poet of the universe,' Théophile Gauthier reflected. By the 1820s artists regularly referred to their craft as a religion, and Victor Hugo represented himself alternately as Zoroaster, Moses and Christ, somewhere between prophet and God."[533]

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[532] Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914,* London: Penguin, 2017, pp. 81-82.

The forty years or so between the First and the Second French Revolutions (in 1789 and 1830 respectively) are among the most decisive and profound transition-periods in the history of the world. The changes are most obvious, of course, in politics; and there is no question but that the French revolution constitutes the vital link between the English revolution of the seventeenth century and the Russian revolution of the twentieth century, constituting the break-through that destroyed the old, and created the new world that we live in now. However, it could be argued that the political revolution was less profound and all-embracing than the revolution in thought and feeling that we call the Romantic movement, and that gave the revolution its long-term vitality.

Romanticism was influenced by Rousseau's concept of the "natural man", which, as George L. Mosse writes, emphasized "that the individual was good and virtuous when removed from the fetters of civilization. In such an ideal state heart and head were unspoiled and therefore functioned properly. For Rousseau and other eighteenth-century thinkers this meant that humans were both reasonable and virtuous. However, the element of human reason in the state of nature played, for Rousseau, a lesser part than the goodness of the heart. This foreshadowed the romantic belief in the essential rightness and virtue of mankind's proper emotions when they are left to develop freely. The concept of natural man became a widespread fad in the eighteenth century: Louis XVI and his queen had a rural village built for themselves behind their palace of the Trianon where they could play at 'natural' man and wife. Moreover, this image was associated with rural life, the kind of Arcadia which writer had idealized for centuries. It should be kept in mind that the ideal of natural man associated with rural life was not only a background for the romantic movement, but also went into the making of one of the most important preconceptions of the nineteenth century, indeed of modern times: namely, that the peasant represents the greatest virtues in a society which is growing ever more industrial and urban.

"The concept of 'natural man' was not the only element which went into the making of the romantic atmosphere. Evangelicalism in England and pietism in Germany provided important stimuli for romanticism, just as they were to be important in the making of the new middle-class morality. Both stressed 'piety of the heart' – religion as an emotional experience. Pietism was more temperate than the evangelical movement; nevertheless, the emotional appeal was present. Evangelicalism with its outright appeal to emotional conversion, 'coming to Christ', implanted an emotionalism in all classes of the English population. The emphasis upon hymn singing together with preaching as the chief outward appeals of faith played an important part. Nor can the increasing stream of oratory and moral exhortations which marked both movements be neglected. Many other causes, like the Temperance League and the Society Against Vice, depended on similar methods. All over Europe the reading public was increasing; and what they read, above all, were books of edification or moral exhortation to lead a good life. Education by exhortation was prominent in the making of middle-class morality, as Dr. Thomas Arnold of Rugby can show, but it also created an atmosphere congenial to life viewed as an emotional experience.

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[533] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 255.

"Though Rousseau foreshadowed the romantic mood in France and evangelicalism did much to encourage it in England, Germany seemed at the head of the movement during the eighteenth century. Not only German pietism, but particularly a literary movement known as the storm and stress (*Sturm und Drang,* 1765-1785) set the romantic tone. Making its home in Weimar, the movement's importance for the cultural revival in Germany was equal to its contribution to romanticism. Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), in particular, portrayed his heroes in terms of their inner responses to life, abstracting people from their environment. In depicting the *Robbers*, for example, he made their inner conflicts and the resulting tragedy take precedence over the morality or the effects of their actions. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), the greatest German man of letters of that century, passed through the Enlightenment and classicism to a romantic period. The narrative of his journeys to Italy did much to stimulate a new emphasis upon nature as emotional and sentient rather than as imprisoned within rational laws of nature."[534]

Sturm und Drang, writes Zamoyski, "was essentially an emotional revolt against all rational and moral constraint. The tenor of the passions evoked is well rendered by a description of the first night of Schiller's play *The Robbers* in 1781: 'The theatre was like a lunatic asylum, with rolling eyes, clenched fists, hoarse uproar among the audience. Strangers fell sobbing into each other's arms, women tottered, half-fainting, to the door.'"[535]

Another aspect of Romanticism is its seeking of the unusual and the exotic, even the mad and the criminal, in human experience. Thus, as Evans writes, "a number of early Romantic works were written under the influence of opium, including, famously the poem *Kubla Khan* (1816) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834), who became a serious addict, consuming up to four quarts of laudanum (tincture of opium) a week. The drug's impact was recorded in detail by Thomas de Quincey (1785-1859) in his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821). Opium distorted perception of time and space and heightened emotional experience, something that strengthened its appeal to the Romantics. Whereas the Enlightenment had stressed the need to subordinate the emotions to the intellect, Romanticism instead stressed feeling as the fundamental source of truth and authenticity and their expression in art."[536]

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[534] Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe,* Boulder: Westview Press, 1988, pp. 30-31.

[535] Zamoyski, *Holy Madness,* p. 47.

The art which perhaps expressed the Romantic spirit most fully was music. The musical genius – whether a composer, such as Beethoven, or performer such as Paganini, aroused more enthusiasm than any other kind of artist. Paganini was typical. His fantastic virtuosity on the violin (he also played the guitar), his love affairs, his appearance and eccentric conduct, the fabulous fees he charged for his performances, the adoration and vilification he received in almost equal measure, the persistent rumours that he had made a pact with the devil – all this made him, with Liszt and Wagner, the archetypal Romantic genius.[537]

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"In Romanticism," writes Jacques Barzun, "thought and feeling are fused; its bent is toward exploration and discovery at whatever risk of error or failure; the religious emotion is innate and demands expression. Spirit is a reality but where it is placed varies and is secondary: the divine may be reached through nature or art. The individual self is a source of knowledge on which one must act; for one is embarked – *engagé*, as the 20C Existentialists say. To act, enthusiasm must overcome indifference or despair; impulse must be guided by imagination and reason. The search is for truths, which reside in particulars, not in generalities; the world is bigger and more complex than any set of abstractions, and it includes the past, which is never fully done with. Meditating on past and present leads to the estimate of man as great and wretched. But heroes are real and indispensable. They rise out of the people, whose own mind-and-heart provides the makings of high culture. The errors of heroes and peoples are the price of knowledge, religion, and art, life itself being a heroic tragedy."[538]

Romanticism was born as a reaction to the Enlightenment and, more generally, to the whole classical concept of civilization. For the dry, rationalist world-view of the Enlightenment, while it influenced everybody, left many with a feeling that an important part of the truth – especially that truth of the heart which is accessible only to intuition and the emotions - had been left out by it. Moreover, the Scottish philosopher David Hume had demonstrated, by purely logical arguments, that the empirical, rationalist view of the world had, paradoxically, no rational foundations; for it led to a denial of the objective existence of God, the soul, morality and even of the external world, thereby literally cutting the ground from under its feet. It was Hume's withering criticism that drew Immanuel Kant out of his "dogmatic slumbers"; by his *Critique of Pure Reason* and other works, he re-established, at least to his own satisfaction, the necessity of believing in God, the soul, causality, free will and the external world. Ultimately, however, he begat, not a rebirth of empiricism on rational foundations, but the German philosophy of *idealism,* which turned
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everything on its head by defining the material world as spirit, the objective as the subjective, the irrational as the rational.

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[536] Evans, op. cit., p. 449.

[537] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GRnA2IT1V8w.

[538] Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present,* New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 491.

Fr. Georges Florovsky writes that romantics such as Goethe, Carlyle, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Hartmann, Renan and Maeterlinck "at first cautiously, and then with greater and greater ardour, swelled the waves of 'irrationalism'. Everywhere and in everything, right to the religious feeling of the world and the aesthetic perception of life. Beginning with 'literary' phrases about the 'bankruptcy' of science and ending with immersion in the satanic abysses of black magic and the revival of the orgiastic cult of Dionysius and Ceres, from a superficial atheist denial of Christian dogmatics to an inspired justification of 'the many forms of religious experience', from a call to return to nature to futurism – everywhere we see clear manifestations of a profound disbelief in rational knowledge, in 'the wisdom of systems'. 'Intuition' triumphantly squeezed out 'logic', and the very ideal of scientific knowledge of 'the truth' paled – sometimes in the unclear light of biological adaptation to the conditions of existence, sometimes in the vivid flame of mystical feeling and pantheistic joy. The dynamic nature of the cosmos began to be felt. The proud dream of Feierbach to '*create*' God was revived, the old idea of 'the evolving Absolute' and the unfinished nature of the world was resurrected."[539]

Sir Isaiah Berlin's definition is also illuminating: "Since the Greeks, and perhaps long before them, men have believed that to the central questions about the nature and purpose of their lives, and of the world in which they lived, true, objective, universal and eternal answers could be found. If the answers could not be discovered by me, then perhaps by someone more expert or wiser than I; if not in the circumstances in which I found myself, then in others more propitious: in an innocent and happy past – a Garden of Eden from which our ancestors had for their sins been expelled, or perhaps in a golden age that still lay in the future, which posterity (perhaps after much labour and suffering) would, or at any rate could, one day reach. It was assumed that all the truly central problems were soluble in principle even if not in practice. Somewhere true answers to all genuine questions must exist, if not in the minds of men, then in the mind of an omniscient being – real or imaginary, material or ideal, a personal deity, or the universe come to full consciousness of itself.

"This presupposition, which underlies most classical and Christian thought, orthodox and heretical, scientific and religious, was connected with the belief that, whether men knew it or not, the whole of life on earth was in some sense bound up with the search for answer to the great, tormenting questions of fact and of conduct; of what there is, was, will be, can be; of what to do, what to live by, what to seek, hope for, admire, fear, avoid; whether the end of life was happiness or justice or virtue or self-fulfilment or grace and salvation. Individuals, schools of thought, entire civilisations differed about what the answers were, about the proper method of discovering them, about the nature and place of moral or spiritual or scientific authority – that is to say, about how to identify the experts who are qualified to discover and communicate the answers. They argued about what constitutes such qualifications and justifies such claims to authority. But there was no doubt that the truth lay somewhere; that it could in principle be found. Conflicting beliefs were held about the central questions: whether the truth was to be found in reason or in faith, in the Church or the laboratory, in the insights of the uniquely privileged individual – a prophet, a mystic, an alchemist, a metaphysician – or in the collective consciousness of a body of men – the society of the faithful, the traditions of a tribe, a race, a nation, a social class, an academy of experts, an elite of uniquely endowed or trained beings – or, on the contrary, in the mind or heart of any man, anywhere, at any time, provided that he remained innocent and uncorrupted by false doctrines. What was common to all these views – incompatible enough for wars of extermination to have been fought in their name – was the assumption that there existed a reality, a structure of things, a *rerum natura*, which the qualified enquirer could see, study and, in principle, get right. Men were violently divided about the nature and identity of the wise – those who understood the nature of things – but not about the proposition that such wise men existed or could be conceived, and that they would know that which would enable them to deduce correctly what men should believe, how they should act, what they should live by and for.

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[539] Florovsky, "Khitrost' Uma" (The Cunning of the Mind), in *Vera i Kul'tura (Faith and Culture),* St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 49-50.

"This was the great foundation of belief which romanticism attacked and weakened. Whatever the differences between the leading romantic thinkers – the early Schiller and the later Fichte, Schelling and Jacobi, Tieck and the Schlegels when they were young, Chateaubriand and Byron, Coleridge and Carlyle, Kierkegaard, Stirner, Nietzsche, Baudelaire – there runs through their writings a common notion, held with varying degrees of consciousness and depth, that truth is not an objective structure, independent of those who seek it, the hidden treasure waiting to be found, but is itself in all its guises created by the seeker. It is not to be brought into being necessarily by the finite individual: according to some it is created by a greater power, a universal spirit, personal or impersonal, in which the individual is an element, or of which he is an aspect, an emanation, an imperfect reflection. But the common assumption of the romantics that runs counter to the *philosophia perennis* is that the answers to the great questions are not to be discovered so much as to be invented. They are not something found, they are something literally made. In its extreme Idealistic form it is a vision of the entire world. In its more familiar form, it confines itself to the realm of values, ideals, rules of conduct – aesthetic, religious, social, moral, political – a realm seen not as a natural or supernatural order capable of being investigated, described and explained by the appropriate method – rational examination or some more mysterious procedure – but as something that man creates, as he creates works of art; not by imitating, or even obtaining illumination from, pre-existent models or truths, or by applying pre-existent truths or rules that are objective, universal, eternal, unalterable but by an act of creation, the introduction into the world of something literally novel – the activity, natural or supernatural, human or in part divine, owing nothing to anything outside it (in some versions because nothing can be conceived as being outside it), self-subsistent, self-justified, self-fulfilling. Hence that new emphasis on the subjective and ideal rather than the objective and the real, on the process of creation rather than its effects, on motives rather than consequences; and, as a necessary corollary of all this, on the quality of the vision, the state of mind or soul of the acting agent – purity of heart, innocence of intention, sincerity of purpose rather than getting the answer right, that is, accurate correspondence to the 'given'. Hence the emphasis on activity, movement that cannot be reduced to static segments, the flow that cannot be arrested, frozen, analysed without being thereby fatally distorted; hence the constant protest against the reduction of 'life' to dead fragments, of organism to 'mere' mechanical or uniform units; and the corresponding tendency towards similes and metaphors drawn from 'dynamic' sciences – biology, physiology, introspective psychology – and the worship of music, which, of all the arts, appears to have the least relation to universally observable, uniform natural order. Hence, too, the celebration of all forms of defiance directed against the 'given' – the impersonal, the 'brute fact' in morals or in politics – or against the static and the accepted, and the value placed on minorities and martyrs as such, no matter what the ideal for which they suffered.

"This, too, is the source of the doctrine that work is sacred as such, not because of its social function, but because it is the imposition of the individual or collective personality, that is, activity, upon inert stuff. The activity, the struggle is all, the victory nothing: in Fichte's words, '*Frei sein ist nichts – frei werden ist der Himmel*' ('To be free is nothing – to become free is very heaven'). Failure is nobler than success. Self-immolation for a cause is the thing, not the validity of the cause itself, for it is the sacrifice undertaken for its sake that sanctifies the cause, not some intrinsic property of it.

"These are the symptoms of the romantic attitude. Hence the worship of the artist, whether in sound, or word, or colour, as the highest manifestation of the ever-active spirit, and the popular image of the artist in his garret, wild-eyed, wild-haired, poor, solitary, mocked - but independent, free, spiritually superior to his philistine tormentors. This attitude has a darker side too: worship not merely of the painter or the composer or the poet, but of that more sinister artists whose materials are men – the destroyer of old societies, and the creator of new ones – no matter at what human cost: the superhuman leader who tortures and destroys in order to build on new foundations – Napoleon in his most revolutionary aspect. It is this embodiment of the romantic ideal that took more and more hysterical forms and in its extreme ended in violent irrationalism and Fascism. Yet this same outlook also bred respect for individuality, for the creative impulse, for the unique, the independent, for freedom to live and act in the light of personal, undictated beliefs and principles, of undistorted emotional needs, for the value of personal life, of personal relationships, of the individual conscience, of human rights. The positive and negative heritage of romanticism – on the one hand contempt for opportunism, regard for individual variety, scepticism of oppressive general formulae and final solutions, and on the other self-prostration before superior beings and the exaltation of arbitrary power, passion and cruelty – these tendencies, at once reflected and promoted by romantic doctrines, have done more to mould both the events of our century and the concepts in terms in which they are viewed and explained than is commonly recognised in most histories of our time."[540]

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The central false dogma of the Romantic era was the moral superiority and godlike status of the artist (like Byron) and/or the revolutionary (like Napoleon), standing alone and above the world. The political or artistic genius was truly a "genie" who, once let out of his bottle by his divine imagination, could create heaven or hell on earth – and for his worshippers, it didn't really matter which. Revolutionaries and artists both saw visions unattainable to the ordinary mortal, and for that they were venerated as God-seers if not as gods.

For Imagination for the Romantics was much more than the ability to fantasize. As Jacques Barzun writes: "Out of the known or knowable, Imagination connects the remote, interprets the familiar, or discovers hidden realities. Being a means of discovery, it must be called 'Imagination of the real'. Scientific hypotheses perform that same office; they are products of imagination.

"This view of the matter explains why to the Romanticists the arts no longer figured as a refined pleasure of the senses, an ornament of civilized existence, but as one form of the deepest possible reflection on life. Shelley, defending his art, declares poets to be the 'unacknowledged legislators of the world'. The arts convey truths; they are imagination crystallized; and as they transport the soul they reshape the perceptions and possibly the life of the beholder. To perform this feat requires genius, because it is not a mechanical act. To be sure, all art makes use of conventions, but to obey traditional rules and follow set patterns will not achieve that fusion of idea and form which is properly creation. It was Romanticist discussion that made the word *creation* regularly apply to works of art…

"Those Romanticist words, recharged with meaning, helped to establish the religion of art. That faith served those who could and those could not partake of the revived creeds. To call the passion for art a religion is not a figure of speech or a way of praise. Since the beginning of the 19C, art has been defined again and again by its devotees as 'the highest spiritual expression of man'. The dictum leaves no room for anything higher and this highest level is that which, for other human beings, is occupied by religion. To 19C worshippers the arts form a treasury of revelations, a body of scriptures, the makers of this spiritual testament are prophets and seers. And to this day the fortunate among them are treated as demigods…"[541]

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[540] Berlin, "The Essence of European Romanticism", *The Power of Ideas*, London: Pimlico, 1998, pp. 201-204.

[541] Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present*, New York: Perennial, 2000, pp. 473-474.

The long-term effects of Romanticism were disastrous, as disastrous as the political revolutions it inspired, even if in the shorter term they provided a much-needed corrective to the rationalism of the Enlightenment epoch.

As Bertrand Russell writes, "Rousseau and the romantic movement extended subjectivity from theory of knowledge to ethics and politics, and ended, logically, in as complete anarchism as that of Bakunin. This extreme of subjectivism is a form of madness…"[542]

Not for nothing was Adam Zamoyski's excellent study of Romanticism entitled *Holy Madness.* And indeed, much of early nineteenth century history can be seen as a chronicle of madmen. By the middle of the century, reactionaries had succeeded in imposing straitjackets on them. But by the end of the century the madmen – Nietzsche is the most important example - were beginning to take control of the asylum…

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[542] Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy,* London: Allen & Unwin, 1946, p. 514.

39. HISTORY, HISTORICISM AND HEGEL

The pace of change in the period 1789-1830 was so great that men began to look at history itself in a new way…

Since the beginning of the Christian era, the attitude to time and history had been very specific. Time is real, but not, as it were, timeless. All material things will come to an end in time, when Christ comes again in glory to take the whole of redeemed humanity out of time into eternal life with God in heaven, while unredeemed humanity is condemned to eternal death, but continuing existence, with the devil in hell. Therefore all earthly hopes and fears, including all political and social institutions and their associated values, will perish. The one exception is the Church of Christ, which, being the Body of God Incarnate, cannot change; nor can the dogmatic truths and values it proclaims – including, most importantly, the rightness and naturalness of monarchical rule and the hierarchical nature of society, - change in any fundamental way. Both the Orthodox in the East and the Roman Catholics in the West stood for *unchanging truth*; their teaching was the *philosophia perennis.* (In fact, the popes took it upon themselves to "develop", that is, change doctrine through their supposedly infallible pronouncements, such as the addition of the *Filioque* to the Creed. But their *claim* was to express unchanging truth.)

This attitude began to change during the Renaissance, when the idea of radical change became popular and acceptable. However, the Renaissance philosophers looked back, not forward in time; their ideal was a "rebirth" of Greco-Roman antiquity, and their aim was to fuse Christian culture and art with the Classical culture and art of the ancients. Change was welcomed, not because it brought in something new, but because it returned that which was old and supposedly better than the Christian present.

The conceptual breakthrough – or rather, breakdown, that is, conceptual collapse – came with the Enlightenment idea of *Progress.* The ideal now was not a return to past glories, but constant progress towards the unknown and almost unimaginable glories of a future golden age through the application of reason, science and education on an ever-increasing scale. Crucially, this progress was considered to be *inevitable.* So if unhappy events such as wars, pandemics or civil strife took place, these were mere "blips" in the unending progress to a happier future. Or rather, such "blips" should not be considered as "bad" in a real sense, but as creative means towards the providential end of history, that is, a glorious utopia for all those who cooperated with her march (while for those who resisted her there was reserved "the dustbin of history").

This way of thinking, called *historicism,* held a major attraction for nineteenth-century Europeans: it could plausibly (for the unwary) be considered to be compatible both with what was still the majority's old, Christian world-view (providing Christ Himself was airbrushed out of the picture), and with the newest fad of the "enlightened" classes – Romanticism.

For could not History on this view be considered to be God Himself, albeit in an impersonal, secular form? And could not the tragic "blips" in history be compared with the inevitable sufferings of the Christian that purify and train him, making him fit for the infinite joy at the end of the Divine Comedy? And cannot the eternal heaven and hell of Christianity be compared to the fate of the good "progressives" and bad "reactionaries" of historicism, History's chosen and damned? As for Romantic art, did it not thrive on its dynamism, as opposed to the serene, quasi-immobility of baroque and Renaissance art? Thus while the polyphony of a Palestrina motet created the sensation of never-changing timelessness, the *Sturm und Drang* symphonies of Haydn, or Beethoven's *Appassionata* sonata, created the sensation of constant movement from one dissonance to another, finding rest only in the heart-easing consonance of the final chord?

Whatever the philosophical implications of historicism, there is no denying that the greatly increased interest in history that we see in this period had good results. The nineteenth century saw an explosion in historiography from Michelet in France to Macaulay in England to innumerable German historians. There is no doubt that the historical approach also brought spiritual benefits. Thus Karamzin's *History of the Russian State* was, according to Pushkin, "a revelation. You could say that Karamzin discovered ancient Russia as Columbus discovered America." Even dogmatics becomes clearer when viewed in a historical context.

However, historicism encountered a major problem in explaining the very recent history of the French revolution and the Napoleonic despotism. Most intellectuals of the post-Napoleonic generation believed passionately, following the Italian historian, Giamattista Vico, that history followed natural laws which included a law of ever-increasing liberty.But, as George L. Mosse writes, "had liberty not led to the Terror, to Jacobin tyranny and, in the end, to Napoleon's iron grip on Europe? Would liberty, even if conceived in historical terms, not lead to new excesses? The adherents of this new liberty had to face this problem. They believed in liberty but hated what Robespierre and Napoleon had made out of this human longing. The emphasis on history helped here, for such an emphasis precluded sudden innovations. They went one step further and repudiated the revolutionary concept of democracy, a concept they felt led not to liberty but to absolutism. They blamed Rousseau's doctrine of the general will and Robespierre's use of it. Madame de Staël, in her *Considerations upon the French Revolution* (1816), spoke of the Revolution as a crisis in the history of liberty. She contrasted ancient liberty, sanctified by history, to the modernity of despotism. Jacobin popular democracy was, for her, just another form of tyranny; liberty had to be obtained in another way, a way outlined by the French constitution of 1791 and the constitution of England (for Madame de Staël admired the English constitution as did Montesquieu before her). 'It is a beautiful sight this constitution, vacillating a little as it sets out from its port, like a vessel launched at sea, yet unfurling its sails, it gives full play to everything great and generous in the human soul.' Through such a constitution liberty unfolds within the historical process. Liberty was all-important to this talented and famous woman; she hated the Terror but she did not lay it at the doorstep of the Revolution. The *ancien régime* had so corrupted the morals of the people that despotism, not liberty, had to be the outcome of their justified revolt. She held to the oft-repeated view that the champions of reaction, not the revolutionaries, were the ultimate causes of revolutions."[543]

So de Staël's argument came down to the following. First, contrary to the flow of history, despotism had come to power in France under the Bourbons. This then had two contradictory effects: on the one hand, it stimulated the glorious revolution of 1789, which was a glorious step forward for freedom; but on other hand, it also stimulated the Jacobin Terror of 1793, which was a gigantic step backwards towards an even darker despotism.

Clearly, the zig-zags of history were difficult to account for on the historicist theory, seemed to contradict liberal optimism, and even put the ultimate end of utopia in doubt. It was necessary to find a philosopher who would square the circle. That philosopher turned out to be Hegel, one of whose gnomic pronouncements was: "The History of the World is nothing but the development of the Idea of Freedom."

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Now French liberals such as Madame de Staël or Benjamin Constant might speak about the historical process. But their understanding of that process was something quite different from what it meant to the new wave of romantic philosophers that were beginning to make their reputations across the Rhine…

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[543] Mosse, op. cit., pp. 102-103. Mosse writes: "A revival of history underlay the new concept of liberty in the post-Napoleonic generation. This revival had been foreshadowed by the Italian historian, Giambattista Vico, who in his *Scienza Nuova*, the *New Science* (1725), had confronted the rationalism of his age with a philosophy of history. Vico felt that history also worked according to natural laws, laws which determined its movement which Vico took to be cyclical. Civilizations arose and decayed, descending from the age of the gods to that of the heroic and on to the human age and its subsequent decay. Vico's cyclical theory of history had little impact on his contemporaries. Much later, at the end of the nineteenth century, Benedetto Croce refurbished Vico's status as a historian, and still later Oswald Spengler espoused, in part, his theories. Nevertheless, to this post-Napoleonic generation, Vico displayed a philosophy of history governed by natural laws which moved through the engine of the human spirit. Central to this spirit was a concept of liberty.

"What emerged, then, from Vico's thought was a concept of liberty which worked as a natural law in history and through history. 'Everything is history,' the Neapolitan maintained, a remark Croce was fond of repeating later on. While accepting the primacy of the spirit in the human struggle for liberty, the adherents of the religion of liberty abandoned the cyclical rhythm of history in favor of a concept of progress based, as it was, on the optimistic belief of the Enlightenment in the triumph of reason. Now, however, this concept of progress was combined with an awareness of the importance of historical development. Human progress developed through the laws of history and not through the inevitable triumph of reason alone. A concept of liberty was central to this human progress in the sense of liberty's progress as a part of man's progress through history." (*The Culture of Western Europe*, Boulder & London: Westview Press, 1988).

By contrast with the Age of Rationalism, which had sought to elucidate truths that were valid for all cultures and all times, for the Age of Revolution that followed it truth was ineluctably *historical* and *particularist.* And this meant not simply that the truth about a person or nation can be understood only in his or its historical context. It meant that truth itself changes with time. Thus God for the romantics was a dynamic, evolving being indistinguishable from nature and history, always overcoming contradictions and rising to ever higher unities (syntheses) overcoming logical contradictions (theses and antitheses).

It followed that there was no perfectly revealed religion, no absolute truth. "Christians must not be 'vain and foolish', Friedrich Schleiermacher warned, for their religion is not the only 'revealed religion'. All religions are revealed from God. Christianity is the center around which all others gather. The disunity of religions is an evil and 'only in the totality of all such possible forms can there be given the true religion,' Schleiermacher added."[544]

This schema was developed by Friedrich Schelling, who distinguished "the three ages of history - the age of the Father, the age of the Son, and the age of the Holy Spirit which correspond to the events of creation, redemption and consummation. Schelling believed that Christianity was now passing through 'the second age' which Christ 'incarnated' almost two millennia ago.

"In the vocabulary of the Romantics, Christ brought 'the Idea of Christianity' with Him. An 'Idea' is the invisible, unchangeable, and eternal aspect of each thing. (Plato was probably the first to teach 'Idealism'.) Phenomena are visible, changeable, and temporary. Put another way, the Idea of Christianity ('one Church') is what the historical institution will become when it finishes growing, or, as Schelling would say, when God becomes fully God. One may compare its Idea to wheat and historical Christianity (the Idea) to what Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Christianity will become. When the multiplicity of churches grows into the ecumenical Church, then, the Idea of Christianity, of 'one church', will have been actualised in space and time. It will be actualised in the coming of 'the third age', 'the age of the Spirit', 'the age of consummation'."[545]

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[544] Fr. Michael Azkoul, *Anti-Christianity: The New Atheism,* Montreal: Monastery Press, 1984, p. 34.

[545] Azkoul, op cit., pp. 77-78. Schleiermacher saw the essence of religion in the supposed fact that "it resigns at once all claims on anything that belongs either to science or morality. In essence it is neither thought nor action but intuitive contemplation and sentiment" (*Speeches on Religion to its Cultured Despisers*, 1799, Second Speech).

The desire to keep always "in step with the times" was manifestly especially by the third Friedrich, the most famous and influential of them, Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). As Sir Richard Evans writes, he "grew up in south-west Germany under the influence of the Enlightenment, was an admirer of the French Revolution, and of Napoleon. Whom he witnessed entering Jena after the winning the battle of 1806. Following a variety of teaching positions, Hegel was appointed to the Chair of Philosophy in Berlin in 1818, where he remained until his death of cholera in 1831. An atheist, he replaced the concept of God with the idea of the 'World Spirit' of rationality, which he believed was working out its purposes in a process he called 'dialectical', in which one historical condition would be replaced by its antithesis, and then the two would combine to create a final synthesis. As he became more conservative, Hegel began to regard the state of Prussia after 1815 as a 'synthesis' requiring no further alteration. Not surprisingly, he was soon known as 'the Prussian state philosopher'. But his core idea of ineluctable historical progress held a considerable appeal for radicals in many parts of Europe…"[546]

Now Prussia was a mass of contradictions – ideal material for Hegel's very foggy mind, from whose outpourings nobody has yet managed to make a rational synthesis. Between Prussia's extremities in conservative East Prussia and the liberal Rhineland, it embraced a mass of nationalities with no central national assembly or historical or religious communality. It was "a linguistic and cultural patchwork"[547], whose only unifying element was *the state*, which is perhaps why Hegel deified the Prussian state as both Prussia's only possible synthesis - and History's also.

"The state, Hegel argued, was an organism possessing will, rationality and purpose. Its destiny – like that of any living thing – was to change, grow and progressively develop. The state was the power of reason actualizing itself as will; it was a transcendent domain in which the alienated, competitive 'particular interests' of civil society merged into coherence and identity. There was a theological core to Hegel's reflections on the state: the state had a quasi-divine purpose; it was 'God's march through the world'; in Hegel's hands it became the quasi-divine apparatus by which the multitude of subjects who constituted civil society was redeemed into universality."[548]

Hegel's dialectical philosophy of history is important not only for an understanding of future movements, especially Marxism and Fascism, which borrowed much from Hegel, but also in that it constitutes a kind of synthesis of the two major movements of western thought that we have just examined: rationalism, with its political child, liberal democracy, and romanticism, with its offspring, the more collectivist and authoritarian forms of political life.

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[546] Evans, *The Pursuit of Power. Europe 1815-1914,* London: Penguin, p. 175.

[547] Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom. The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947,* London: Penguin, 2006, p. 428.

[548] Clark, *Iron Kingdom,* p. 431.

Hume had demonstrated the irrationality of rationalism, of "pure" empiricism. Kant had demonstrated that the application of reason presupposes a spirit transcending the empirical world, but could not explain how this free realm of spirit related to the causally determined world of matter. Hegel expanded the realm of spirit to engulf everything, making it into a kind of pantheistic god called the Absolute Idea or the World Spirit. To this Spirit, which is the All and can only be understood, like an organism, from the point of view of the All, he gave all the attributes that romanticism had rescued from the maw of devouring rationalism: emotion, mystery, dynamism, history, even nationalism. Thus to the bright empiricist-rationalist thesis, and its dark romantic-idealist antithesis, Hegel supplied a cloudy, metaphysical, empiricist-rationalist *and* romantic-idealist synthesis. And a nonsensically self-contradictory one at that.

Hegel teaches, writes Sir Karl Popper, that "everything is in flux, even essences... History, as he sees it, is the thought process of the 'Absolute Spirit' or 'World Spirit'. It is the manifestation of this Spirit. It is a kind of huge dialectical syllogism; reasoned out, as it were, by Providence. The syllogism is the plan which Providence follows; and the logical conclusion arrived at it's the end which Providence pursues – the perfection of the world. 'The only thought,' Hegel writes in his *Philosophy of History*, 'with which Philosophy approaches History, is the simple conception of Reason; it is the doctrine that Reason is the Sovereign of the World, and that the History of the World, therefore, presents us with a *rational process.* This conviction and intuition is... no hypothesis in the domain of Philosophy. It is there proven... that Reason... is *Substance*; as well as *Infinite Power;... Infinite Matter...*; *Infinite Form...*; *Infinite Energy...* That this "Idea" or "Reason" is the *True*, the *Eternal*, the absolutely *Powerful Essence*; that it reveals itself in the World, and that in that World nothing else is revealed but this and its honour and glory – this is a thesis which, as we have said, has been proven in Philosophy, and is here regarded as demonstrated.'" [549]

"For Hegel as for Kant," writes Niall Ferguson, "'human arbitrariness and even external necessity' had to be subordinated to 'a higher necessity'. 'The sole aim of philosophical inquiry,' as he put it in the second draft of his *Philosophical History of the World*, was 'to eliminate the contingent... In history, we must look for a general design, the ultimate end of the world. We must bring into history the belief and conviction that the realm of the will is not at the mercy of contingency.' However, Hegel's 'higher necessity' was not material but supernatural – indeed, in many ways it closely resembled the traditional Christian God, most obviously when he spoke of 'an eternal justice and love, the absolute and ultimate end [of] which is truth in and for itself'. Hegel just happened to call his God 'Reason'. Thus his basic 'presupposition' was 'the idea that a reason governs the world and that history therefore is a rational process': 'That world history is governed by an ultimate design... whose rationality is... a divine and absolute reason – this is the proposition whose truth we must assume; its proof lies in the study of world history itself, which is the image and enactment of reason... Whoever looks at the world rationally will find that it assumes a rational aspect... The overall content of world history is rational and indeed has to be rational; a divine will rules supreme and is strong enough to determine the overall content. Our aim must be to discern this substance, and to do so, we must bring with us a rational consciousness.' This somewhat circular argumentation was the second possible way [the first was Kant's theory of phenomenal and noumenal realities] of dealing with the Cartesian claim that determinism did not apply to the non-material world. Hegel had no desire to give precedence to materialism: 'The spirit and the course of its development are the true substance of history,' he maintained; and the role of 'physical nature' was emphatically subordinate to the role of 'the spirit'. But 'the spirit', he argued, was just as subject to deterministic forces as physical nature.

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[549] Popper, *The Open Society and its Enemies,* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, pp. 46, 47.

"What were these forces? Hegel equated what he called 'the spirit' with 'the idea of human freedom', suggesting that the historical process could be understood as the attainment of self-knowledge by this idea of freedom through a succession of 'world spirits'. Adapting the Socratic form of philosophical dialogue, he posited the existence of a dichotomy within (to take the example which most concerned him) the national spirit, between the essential and the real, or the universal and the particular. It was the dialectical relationship between these which propelled history onwards and upwards in what has been likened to a dialectical waltz – thesis, antithesis, synthesis. But this was a waltz, Fred Astaire style, up a stairway. 'The development, progress and ascent of the spirit towards a higher concept of itself... is accomplished by the debasement, fragmentation and destruction of the preceding mode of reality... The universal arises out of the particular and determinate and its negation... All this takes place automatically.'

"The implications of Hegel's model were in many ways more radical than those of any contemporary materialist theory of history. In his contradiction-driven scheme of things, the individual's aspirations and fate counted for nothing: they were 'a matter of indifference to world history, which uses individuals only as instruments to further its own progress'. No matter what injustice might befall individuals, 'philosophy should help us to understand that the actual world is as it ought to be'. For 'the actions of human beings in the history of the world produce an effect altogether different from what they themselves intend' and 'the worth of individuals is measured by the extent to which they reflect and represent the national spirit'. Hence 'the great individuals of world history... are those who seize upon [the] higher universal and make it their own end'. Morality was therefore simply beside the point: 'World history moves on a higher plane than that to which morality properly belongs.' And, of course, 'the concrete manifestation' of 'the unity of the subjective will and the universal' – 'the totality of ethical life and the realisation of freedom' – was that fetish-object of Hegel's generation: the (Prussian) state.

"With such arguments, Hegel had, it might be said, secularised predestination, translating Calvin's theological dogma into the realm of history. The individual now lost control not only of his salvation in the afterlife, but also of his fate on earth... At the same time, there was at least a superficial resemblance between Hegel's idealist philosophy of history and the materialist theories which had developed elsewhere. Hegel's 'cunning of Reason' was perhaps a harsher master than Kant's 'Nature' and Smith's 'Invisible Hand'; but these other quasi-deities performed analogous roles."[550]

Hegel denied freedom while seemingly glorifying it. "Hegel vehemently rejected the metaphorical machine-state favoured by theorists of the high enlightenment, on the grounds that it treated 'free human beings' as if they were mere cogs in its mechanism. The Hegelian state was not an imposed concept, but the highest expression of the ethical substance of a people, the unfolding of a transcendent and rational order, the 'actualisation of freedom'."[551]

Here we clearly see the influence on Hegel of a central pillar of German romanticism - the cult of the personality, freedom and creativity. Nevertheless, it is difficult to see how the most romantic of German philosophies, that of Hegel, is compatible with personal freedom and creativity. As Fr. Georges Florovsky writes: "The romantic cult of personality, unrepeatable, autonomous and self-sufficient, which itself ascribes its own laws, the Fichtean pathos of the freedom of moral creativity, Schelling's aestheticism of genius, Schleiermacher's religion of feeling and mood - all this is too well known. And this whole series is completed by Hegelianism, in which freedom, the freedom of creative self-definition becomes the main theme of cosmic development. And yet at the same time, in these individualistic systems, personality, strictly speaking... disappears, there is no place in them for the *creative* personality. We shall not understand the real reason for this unexpected event if we search for it in the

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[550] Niall Ferguson, *Virtual History,* London: Picador, 1997, pp. 28-31.

[551] Clark, op. cit., p. 431.

'pantheism' of the world-feeling of the time: after all, it was not a matter of dissolving the personality in nature, but of finding the whole of nature within oneself, as in an autonomous 'microcosm'. The resolution of the enigma must be sought, not in a *world-feeling,* but in a *world-understanding. Logical providentialism* - that is how best to express the characteristic trait of this world-understanding; and it is precisely this idea of *the sheer logicalness of the world, the rationality of history*, so to speak, *the rational transparency* of the cosmic process that is the profound source of the inner dissonances of idealistic individualism.

“The world, both in its stasis and in its movement, is seen as the realization of a certain reasonable plan. Moreover, - this is very essential, - this plan is recognized as not exceeding the power of human attainment. Every moment of historical development is presented as the incarnation of some ‘idea’ that admits of an abstract formulation. Also in the succession of these ‘epochs’ is revealed a definite logical order, and the whole series is oriented in the direction of a certain accomplished structure in which the fullness of its reasonable content is revealed. That necessity with which the whole system of affirmations in space proceeds in its smallest details as from the axioms of geometry, is also seen in cosmic evolution, in the advancing pace of human history. The role of axioms is played here by the elementary motifs of the Reason that creates the universe, which are accepted as something accessible to human knowledge, so that, proceeding from them, we can as it were divine in advance every bend in the evolutionary flow. The course of history turns out to be unambiguously determined. And thought does not stop at the ‘beginning’ of the world, but also penetrates into the mysteries of that ‘which was when there was nothing’, and demonstrates the fated necessity of the building of the Absolute First-Cause of all itself. It demonstrates that the world could not fail to arise, and moreover could not fail to arise precisely as we know it. Thus the ‘thinking through’ of history, carried to its conclusion, leads to inevitable determinism: every ray of freedom or creativity dies in the vice of iron logic. Nothing ‘new’ in essence can arise; only the inescapable conclusions from pre-eternal postulates come into being – come into being in and of themselves.

“But this is not all: the ‘rationalization’ of history includes one more thought. The aim of history is the realization of a definite *construction*, the installation into life of a definite *form of existence*. This ‘construction’ and ‘existence’ turn out to be the single value, and this will and must be so, since logical completion and moral worth have been equated with each other from the very beginning. The forms of natural existence or the forms of social organization are subject to moral justification, and they are the same; only abstractions have moral meaning. The individual can have an ethical content only *indirectly*, only insofar as it realizes an ‘idea’, and only because it serves as its shell. In other words, unconditional meaning belongs, not to people, but to ideas. ‘The good’ can be a theocracy, a democratic state or *der geschlossene Handelsstaat* [closed mercantile state], but not creative personalities.

"And finally, if the gradation of values exactly reproduces the dialectical succession of ideas, then, in essence, this gradation does not exist as such; historical development goes from the imperfect to increasing perfection, from the worse to the better, so that it ends with all-perfection, the highest concentration of the Good. But this highest level, which is in a fatalistic way inevitable, is at the same time absolutely impossible without the lower levels. It possesses its own *worth only because* behind it lies the unworthy. Good is impossible without Evil, and not only because these concepts are co-relative, but also because ontologically the power of the Good grows only out of the not-good. Evil is not only undeveloped good, incomplete perfection, but also a *necessary* constituent *part* of the Good. Evil had to arise inside the Divinity itself in order that God could become the real God, completely Unconditional. The meaning of the world can be realized only through meaninglessness. And it is clear that in this way that unconditional disparity that characterizes the predicates 'good' and 'bad' for the 'naïve' moral consciousness is removed. 'Sin' is turned into the inevitable 'mistake' of immature age, and moral tragedy becomes a cunningly devised melodrama…"[552]

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Hegel's philosophy, according to Arthur Schopenhauer's just judgement, was "a colossal piece of mystification which will yet provide posterity with an inexhaustible theme for laughter at our times; it is a pseudo-philosophy paralyzing all mental powers, stifling all real thinking, and, by the most outrageous misuse of language, putting in its place the hollowest, most senseless, thoughtless, and, as is confirmed by its success, most stupefying verbiage." And again: "The height of audacity in serving up pure nonsense, in stringing together senseless and extravagant mazes of words, such as had been only previously known in madhouses, was finally reached in Hegel, and became the instrument of the most barefaced, general mystification that has ever taken place, with a result which will appear fabulous to posterity, as a monument to German stupidity."[553]

According to the German historian Golo Mann, Hegel's philosophy is "a fantastic, almost mad, almost successful [!] attempt to give an answer to every question ever asked, and to assign to every answer ever given to every question a historical place within his own great, final answer – an attempt to create being dialectically from thought, to reconcile idea and reality and to overcome the cleavage between self and non-self. It was this cleavage – the existence of the self in an alien world – that Hegel made his starting-point. What he found was the identity of everything with everything, of God with the world, of logic with reality, of motion with rest, of necessity with freedom. The world spirit is everywhere, in nature, in man, in the history of man. The spirit, alienated from itself in nature, comes into its own in man. This process takes place on the one hand in the true history of peoples and states, and on the other in art, religion and philosophy. All these spheres correspond to each other; what is accomplished in each individual sector belongs to the whole and fits into it or nothing will be accomplished. 'As far as the individual is concerned each person cannot in any even help being the child of his time. So too philosophy is the expression of its time in ideas.' 'He who expresses and accomplishes what his time wills is the great man of his time.' Every present is always a single whole, just as the history of mankind is its general lines a whole. It finds expression in peoples, states and civilizations, of which the west European or, as Hegel calls it, the Germanic is the highest so far attained.[554] Will there be higher ones? On this point the philosopher is silent. One can only understand the past, and the present to the extent that it is the final product of all pasts which are preserved in it. The future cannot be explored or understood; it does not exist for the spirit. No other historical thinker was so little concerned with the future as Hegel. What he hinted at, or what followed from his doctrine, was that the future would be something entirely different from the past. For philosophy comes late, at the end of an epoch. It does not come to change or improve, but merely to understand and to express; it constructs in the realm of the spirit what has already been constructed in the realm of reality. 'When philosophy paints its picture in grey on grey, it means that a form of life has grown old, and by painting it grey on grey it cannot be restored to its youth, but is only recognised…' This applies to all true philosophies, and is most valid for the philosophy of all philosophies, namely the Hegelian, which brings to an end the epoch of all epochs: the age of Protestantism, enlightenment and revolution. What was still to come? Hegel shrugged his shoulders sadly at this question. His philosophy gave no answer, and given its nature could not venture to attempt one. 'The spirit is in its full essence in the present…' But this philosophy of fulfilment, this song of praise of Man-God contains an element of pessimism: after 1815 nothing further is to be expected.

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[552] Florovsky, "Smysl istorii i smysl zhizni" (The Meaning of History and the Meaning of Life), *Vera i Kultura* (Faith and Culture), St. Petersburg, 2002, pp. 63-65.

[553] Schopenhauer, *On the Basis of Morality; Criticism of the Kantian Philosophy.*

"Though Hegel's philosophy as a whole contains rest, fulfilment and finality, it is full of unrest and struggle, both in the realm of the spirit and of reality. The spirit is never content with what has been achieved, it always seeks new conflicts, it must struggle to find and express itself anew. States and peoples are never at rest, they come into conflict and one of them must give way. The world spirit advances by catastrophes, and its path is marked by forms that are used up, emptied, and jettisoned. Quiet is only apparent quiet, lull before a new storm; as mere rest it is of no interest to the historian. 'Epochs of happiness are empty pages in the history of the world.' History does not exist for the happiness, the idyllic contentment of the individual. The goal is set high: the reconciliation of all contradictions, absolute justice, complete knowledge, the incarnation of reason on earth, the presence of God. The road to it is one of exertion and ever new confusion. But what has happened is the only thing that could have happened and how it happened was right. Terrible things occurred;

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[554] Not quite: he said that "the final embodiment of the Absolute Idea, beyond which no further development would be possible" was *America*. (Norman Davies, *Europe,* London: Pimlico, 1997, p. 790) (V.M.)

the rise of the Roman Empire was terrible and terrible was its fall. But everything had a purpose and was as it should be. Julius Caesar was murdered after he had done what the age wanted from him; the Roman Empire collapsed after it had completed its historical mission. Otherwise how could it have fallen? It is useless to lament the abysses of history, the crimes of power, the sufferings of good men. The world spirit is right in the end, its will will be obeyed, its purpose fulfilled; what does it care about the happiness or unhappiness of individuals?[555] 'The real is rational and the rational is the real.' When something ceases to be rational, when the spirit has already moved on, it will wither away and die. The individual may not understand his fate because he is liable to overestimate himself and believes that history revolves around his person at the centre. The philosopher who perceives the kernel in the multi-coloured rind of what occurs will provide the insight too.

"Power, and war, which creates and enhances power, cannot be omitted from all this. Man only realizes himself in the state and the state exists only where there is power to defend and attack. Might gives right. It is unlikely, it is in fact impossible, that the state without right on its side will win. What sort of right? Not a universally valid, pale right invented by stoicist philosophers, but historical right, the superiority of the historical mission. Thus right was on the side of the Spaniards against the Peruvians, in spite of all their cruelty and deceit; right was on Napoleon's side against the antiquated German Empire. Later, on the other hand, right was on the side of allied Europe against Napoleon only because, the professor concluded after much puzzling over this problem in his study, the arrogant Emperor, himself now outdated, gave the Allies the right to conquer him, and only because he put himself in the wrong could he be conquered. Success, the outcome, provide the justification; in power there lies truth…"[556]

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Hegel's philosophy is manifestly false. Nevertheless, in view of its historical importance, we need to study it, and in particular his political philosophy, in a little more detail.

Hegel made rebelliousness and revolution respectable, as being, not optional modes of thought and action, but inherent in the deepest nature of things. Rebelliousness was an aspect of "alienation", and revolution – of the self-realization of the World Spirit. For "Hegel's dialectic," writes Sir Roger Scruton, "implies that all knowledge, all activity and all emotions exist in a state of tension, and are driven by this tension to enact a primeval drama. Each concept, desire and feeling exists first in a primitive, immediate and unified form – without self-knowledge, and inherently unstable, but nevertheless at home with itself. Its final 'realization' is achieved only in a condition of 'unity restored', a homecoming to the primordial point of rest, but in a condition of achieved self-knowledge and fulfilled intention. In order to reach this final point, each aspect of spirit must pass through a long trajectory of separation, sundered from its home, and struggling to affirm itself in a world that it does not control. This state of alienation – the vale of tears – is the realm of becoming, in which consciousness is separated from its object and also from itself. There are as many varieties of alienation as there are forms of spiritual life; but in each form the fundamental drama is the same: spirit can know itself only if it 'posits' an object of knowledge – only if it invests its world with the idea of the other. In doing this it becomes other to itself, and lives through conflict and disharmony, until finally uniting with the other – as we unite with the object of science when fully understanding it; with the self when overcoming guilt and religious estrangement; with other people when joined in a lawful body politic."[557]

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[555] "'The deeds of Great Men, of the Personalities of World History,… must not be brought into collision with irrelevant moral claims. *The Litany of private virtues, of modesty, humility, philanthropy, and forbearance,* must not be raised against them. The History of the World can, in principle, entirely ignore the circle within which morality… lies'." (in Popper, op. cit., pp. 67-68) (V.M.)

[556] Mann, *The History of Germany since 1789*, London: Pimlico, 1996, pp. 46-48.

Lionel Trilling writes: "The historical process that Hegel undertakes to expound is the self-realization of Spirit through the changing relation of the individual to the external power of society in two of its aspects, the political power of the state and the power of wealth. In an initial stage of the process that is being described the individual consciousness renders what Hegel calls 'obedient service' to the external power and feels for it an 'inner reverence'. Its service is not only obedient but also silent and unreasoned, taken for granted; Hegel calls this 'the heroism of dumb service'. This entire and inarticulate accord of the individual consciousness with the external power of society is said to have the attribute of 'nobility'.

"But the harmonious relation of the individual consciousness to the state power and to wealth is not destined to endure. It is the nature of Spirit, Hegel tells us, to seek 'existence on its own account' – that is, to free itself from limiting conditions, to press towards autonomy. In rendering 'obedient service' to and in feeling 'inner reverence' for anything except itself it consents to the denial of its own nature. If it is to fulfill its natural destiny of self-realization, it must bring an end to its accord with the external power of society. And in terminating this 'noble' relation the individual consciousness moves towards a relation with external power which Hegel calls 'base'.

"The change is not immediate. Between the noble relation of the individual consciousness to state power and to wealth and the developing base relation there stands what Hegel speaks of as a 'mediating term'. In this transitional stage the 'heroism of dumb service' modifies itself to become a heroism which is not dumb but articulate, what Hegel calls the 'heroism of flattery'. The individual, that is to say, becomes conscious of his relation to the external power of society; he becomes conscious of having made the choice the maintain the relationship and of the prudential reasons which induced him to make it – the 'flattery' is, in effect, the rationale of his choice which the individual formulates in terms of the virtues of the external power, presumably a personal monarch. We might suppose that Hegel had in mind the relation of the court aristocracy to Louis XIV. Consciousness and choice, it is clear, imply a commitment to, rather than identification with, the external power of society.

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[557] Scruton, *Modern Philosophy*, London: Arrow, 1997, pp. 463-464.

"From this modification of the 'noble' relation to the external power the individual proceeds to the 'baseness' of being actually antagonistic to the external power. What was once served and reverenced now comes to be regarded with resentment and bitterness. Hegel's description of the new attitude is explicit: ' It [that is, the individual consciousness] looks upon the authoritative power of the state as a chain, as something suppressing its separate autonomous existence, and hence hates the ruler, obeys only with secret malice and stands ever ready to burst out in rebellion.' And the relation of the individual self to wealth is even baser, if only because of the ambivalence which marks it – the self loves wealth but at the same time despises it; through wealth the self 'attains to the enjoyment of its own independent existence', but it find wealth discordant with the nature of Spirit, for it is of the nature of Spirit to be permanent, whereas enjoyment is evanescent.

"The process thus described makes an unhappy state of affairs but not, as Hegel judges it, by any means a deplorable one. He intends us to understand that the movement from 'nobility' to 'baseness' is not a devolution but a development. So far from deploring 'baseness', Hegel celebrates it. And he further confounds our understanding by saying that 'baseness' leads to and therefore is 'nobility'. What is the purpose of this high-handed inversion of common meanings?

"An answer might begin with the observation that the words 'noble' and 'base', although they have been assimilated to moral judgement, did not originally express concepts of moral law, of a prescriptive and prohibitory code which is taken to be of general, commanding, and even supernal authority and in which a chief criterion of a person's rightdoing and wrongdoing is the effect of his conduct upon other persons. The words were applied, rather, to the ideal of personal existence of a ruling class at a certain time – its ethos, in that sense of the word which conveys the idea not of abstractly right conduct but of a characteristic manner of style of approved conduct. What is in accord with this ethos is noble; what falls short of it or derogates from it is base. The noble self is not shaped by its beneficent intentions towards others; its intention is wholly towards itself, and such moral virtue as may be attributed to it follows incidentally from its expressing the privilege and function of its social status in mien and deportment. We might observe that the traits once thought appropriate to the military life are definitive in the formation of the noble self. It stands before the world boldly defined, its purposes clearly conceived and openly avowed. In its consciousness there is no division, it is at one with itself. The base self similarly expresses a social condition, in the first instance by its characteristic mien and deportment, as these are presumed or required to be, and ultimately by the way in which it carries out those of its purposes that are self-serving beyond the limits deemed appropriate to its social status. These purposes can be realized only by covert means and are therefore shameful. Between the intentions of the base self and its avowals there is no congruence. But the base self, exactly because it is not under the control of the noble ethos, has won at least a degree of autonomy and has thereby fulfilled the nature of Spirit. In refusing its obedient service to the state power and to wealth it has lost its wholeness; its selfhood is 'disintegrated'; the self is 'alienated' from itself. But because it has detached itself from imposed conditions, Hegel says that it has made a step in progress. He puts it that the existence of the self 'on its own account' is, strictly speaking, the loss of itself'. The statement can also be made the other way round: 'Alienation of self is really self-preservation'."[558]

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Bertrand Russell, expounded Hegel thus: "In the historical development of Spirit there have been three main phases: The Orientals, the Greeks and Romans, and the Germans. 'The history of the world is the discipline of the uncontrolled natural will, bringing it into obedience to a universal principle and conferring subjective freedom. The East knew, and to the present day knows, only that One is free; the Greek and Roman world, that some are free; the German world knows that All are free.' One might have supposed that democracy would be the appropriate form of government where all are free, but not so. Democracy and aristocracy alike belong to the stage where some are free, despotism to that where one is free, and monarchy to that in which all are free. This is connected with the very odd sense in which Hegel uses the word 'freedom'. For him (and so far we may agree) there is no freedom without law; but he tends to convert this, and to argue that wherever there is law there is freedom. Thus 'freedom', for him, means little more than the right to obey the law.

"As might be expected, he assigns the highest role to the Germans in the terrestrial development of Spirit. 'The German spirit is the spirit of the new world. Its aim is the realization of absolute Truth as the unlimited self-determination of freedom – that freedom which has its own absolute form itself as its purport.'[559]

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[558] Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity,* Oxford University Press, 1974, pp. 35-38.

[559] "And after a eulogy of Prussia, the government of which, Hegel assures us, 'rests with the official world, whose apex is the personal decision of the Monarch; for a final decision is, as shown above, an absolute necessity', Hegel reaches the crowning conclusion of his work: 'This is the point,' he says, 'which consciousness has attained, and these are the principal phases of that form in which Freedom has realized itself; for the History of the World is nothing but the development of the Idea of Freedom… That the History of the World… is the realization of Spirit, this is the true Theodicy, the justification of God in History… What has happened and is happening… is essentially His Work…'

"This is a very superfine brand of freedom. It does not mean that you will be able to keep out of a concentration camp. It does not imply democracy, or a free press, or any of the usual Liberal watchwords, which Hegel rejects with contempt. When Spirit gives laws to itself, it does so freely. To our mundane vision, it may seem that the Spirit that gives laws is embodied in the monarch, and the Spirit to which laws are given is embodied in his subjects. But from the point of view of the Absolute the distinction between monarch and subjects, like all other distinctions, is illusory, and when the monarch imprisons a liberal-minded subject, that is still Spirit freely determining itself. Hegel praises Rousseau for distinguishing between the general will and the will of all. One gathers that the monarch embodies the general will, whereas a parliamentary majority only embodies the will of all…

"So much is Germany glorified that one might expect to find it the final embodiment of the Absolute Idea, beyond which no further development would be possible. But this is not Hegel's view. On the contrary, he says that America is the land of the future, 'where, in the ages that lie before us, the burden of the world's history shall reveal itself – perhaps in a contest between North and South America.' He seems to think that everything important takes the form of war. If it were suggested to him that the contribution of America to world history might be the development of a society without extreme poverty, he would not be interested. On the contrary, he says that, as yet, there is no real State in America, because a real State requires a division of classes into rich and poor.

"Nations, in Hegel, play the part that classes play in Marx. The principle of historical development, he says, is national genius. In every age, there is some one nation which is charged with the mission of carrying the world through the stage of the dialectic that it has reached. In our age, of course, this nation is Germany.[560] But in addition to nations, we must also take account of world-historical individuals; these are men in whose aims are embodied the dialectical transitions that are due to take place in their time. These men are heroes, and may justifiably contravene ordinary moral rules…

"I ask whether I was not justified when I said that Hegel presents us with an apology for God and Prussia at the same time, and whether it is not clear that the state which Hegel commands us to worship as the Divine Idea on earth is not simply Frederick William's Prussia from 1800 to 1830…

"We see that Hegel replaces the liberal elements in nationalism, not only by a Platonic-Prussian worship of the state, but also by a worship of history, of historical success. (Frederick William had been successful against Napoleon.)" (Popper, op. cit., pp. 48-49,58). (V.M.)

[560] "'The Nation State is Spirit in its substantive rationality and immediate actuality,' he writes; 'it is therefore the absolute power on earth…The State is the Spirit of the People itself. The actual State is animated by this spirit, in all its particular affairs, its Wars, and its Institutions… The self-consciousness of one particular Nation is the vehicle for the… development of the collective spirit;… in it, the Spirit of the Time invests its Will. Against this Will, the other national minds have no rights: *that* Nation dominates the World.'" (Popper, op. cit., p. 58).

"Hegel's emphasis on nations, together with his peculiar conception of 'freedom', explains his glorification of the State – a very important aspect of his political philosophy….

"We are told in *The Philosophy of History* that 'the State is the actually existing realized moral life', and that all the spiritual reality possessed by a human being he possesses only through the State. 'For his spiritual reality consists in this, that his own essence – Reason – is objectively present to him, that it possesses objective immediate existence for him… For truth is the unity of the universal and subjective Will, and the universal is to be found in the State, in its laws, its universal and rational arrangements. The State is the Divine Idea as it exists on earth.'[561]…

"… If the State existed only for the interests of individuals (as Liberals contend), an individual might or might not be a member of the State. It has, however, a quite different relation to the individual: since it is objective Spirit, the individual only has objectivity, truth, and morality in so far as he is a member of the State, whose true content and purpose is union as such. It is admitted that there may be bad States, but these merely exist, and have no true reality, whereas a rational State is infinite in itself.

"It will be seen that Hegel claims for the State much the same position as St. Augustine and his Catholic successors claimed for the Church. There are, however, two respects in which the Catholic claim is more reasonable than Hegel's. In the first place, the Church is not a chance geographical association, but a body united by a common creed, believed by its members to be of supreme importance; it is thus by its very essence the embodiment of what Hegel calls the 'Idea'. In the second place, there is only one Catholic Church, whereas there are many States. When each State, in relation to its subjects, is made an absolute as Hegel makes it, there is difficulty in finding any philosophical principle by which to regulate the relations between different States. In fact, at this point Hegel abandons his philosophical talk, falling back on the state of nature and Hobbes's war of all against all.

"The habit of speaking of 'the State', as if there were only one, is misleading so long as there is no world State. Duty being, for Hegel, solely a relation of the individual to his State, no principle is left by which to moralize the relations between States. This Hegel recognizes. In external relations, he says, the State is an individual, and each State is independent as against the others. 'Since in this independence the being-for-self of real spirit has its existence, it is the first freedom and highest honour of a people.' He goes on to argue against any sort of League of Nations by which the independence of separate States might be limited. The duty of a citizen is entirely confined (so far as the external relations of his State are concerned) to upholding the substantial individuality and independence and sovereignty of his own State. It follows that war is not wholly an evil, or something that we should seek to abolish. The purpose of the State is not merely to uphold the life and property of the citizens, and this fact provides the moral justification of war, which is not to be regarded as an absolute evil or as accidental, or as having its cause in something that ought not to be.

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[561] Hegel goes on: "We must therefore worship the State as the manifestation of the Divine on earth, and consider that, if it is difficult to comprehend Nature, it is infinitely harder to grasp the Essence of the State… The State is the march of God through the world…. The State must be comprehended as an organism… To the complete State belongs, essentially, consciousness and thought. The State knows what it wills… The State is real; and… true reality is necessary. What is real is eternally necessary… The State… exists for its own sake… The State is the actually existing, realized moral life." (Popper, op. cit., p. 31).

"Hegel does not mean only that, in some situations, a nation cannot rightly avoid going to war. He means much more than this. He is opposed to the creation of institutions – such as a world government – which would prevent such situations from arising, because he thinks it a good thing that there should be wars from time to time. War, he says, is the condition in which we take seriously the vanity of temporal goods and things. (This view is to be contrasted with the opposite theory, that all wars have economic causes.) War has a positive moral value: 'War has the higher significance that through it the moral health of peoples is preserved in their indifference towards the stabilizing of finite determinations.' Peace is ossification; the Holy Alliance, and Kant's League for Peace, are mistaken, because a family of states needs an enemy. Conflicts of States can only be decided by war; States being towards each other in a state of nature, their relations are not legal or moral. Their rights have their reality in their particular wills, and the interest of each State is its own highest law. There is no contrast of morals and politics, because States are not subject to ordinary moral laws.

"Such is Hegel's doctrine of the State – a doctrine which, if accepted, justifies every internal tyranny and every external aggression that can possibly be imagined…"[562]

For, as Hegel put it, "the march of world history stands outside virtue, vice and justice…"[563]

As Copleston points out, "it is essential to remember that Hegel is speaking throughout of the concept of the State, its ideal essence. He has no intention of suggesting that historical States are immune from criticism."[564] Nevertheless, the similarities between Hegel and the modern totalitarians, especially the Fascists, are clear: "(a) Nationalism, in the form of the historicist idea that the state is the incarnation of the Spirit (or now, of the Blood) of the state-creating nation (or race); one chosen nation (now, the chosen race) is destined for world domination. (b) The state as the natural enemy of all other states must assert its existence in war. (c) The state is exempt from any kind of moral obligation;

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[562] Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy*, London: Allen Unwin, 1946, pp. 763-764, 765-769.

[563] Hegel, *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 7, p. 448; in Berlin, "The Originality of Machiavelli", *The Proper Study of Mankind,* London: Pimlico, 1998, p. 317.

[564] Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 7, part I: Fichte to Hegel, pp. 255-256.

history, that is, historical success, is the sole judge; collective utility is the sole principle of personal conduct; propagandist lying and distortion of the truth is permissible. (d) The 'ethical' idea of war (total and collectivist), particularly of young nations against older ones; war, fate and fame as most desirable goods. (e) The creative rôle of the Great Man, the world-historical personality, the man of deep knowledge and great passion (now, the principle of leadership). (f) The ideal of the heroic life ('live dangerously') and of the 'heroic man' as opposed to the petty bourgeois and his life of shallow mediocrity."[565]

Barzun has sought to lessen Hegel's guilt somewhat: "Hegel did express himself in favor of a strong state. What intelligent German who remembered 200 years of helplessness would want a weak one? In Hegel's day, the state created by the Prussian awakening was less than 20 years old and must not be allowed to droop again"[566] True; and yet the desire for a strong state, which is compatible with many creeds and philosophies, need not be translated into the *worship* of the State as the Divine Idea on earth, which is in effect Hegel's idea. As he put it: "the State is the basis and centre of all the concrete elements in the life of a people: of Art, Law, Morals, Religion, and Science…"[567] This is idolatry, State-worship, and the purest atheism…

Golo Mann writes penetratingly about Hegel: "If Hegel's philosophy had been true, then it could not remain true: it must be treated as Hegel had treated all earlier philosophy, 'set aside', affirmed and denied at the same time. Hegel had started life as a Protestant and had somehow managed to bring Christianity even into his mature philosophy. His disciples or their disciples broke with Christianity and became atheists – an attitude which could be derived from Hegel's philosophy, if it was followed to its logical conclusion. They took it upon themselves to explain Christianity, like all religious belief, historically, as a reflection of social reality, as a self-misunderstanding. Hegel had spoken much of the reconciliation of idea and reality, but he had achieved this reconciliation only in the mind, through his philosophy; it was for philosophy to recognize retrospectively that what happened in reality was reasonable. Hegel's successors, however, claimed that reality was not reasonable but must be *made* reasonable, not by dreams but by political action. Politics, rightly understood, was thus in the end the true philosophy. Hegel had spoken of the 'truth of power', and had meant the power of the state, of kings, of victorious armies. His followers spoke of the truth of revolutions, of majorities, of mass action. There was no need to fear the masses as Hegel had feared them. The rights of the private individual were not as important as liberals believed. The state could not be too powerful, provided it was a scientifically directed state, free from all superstition. Such a state would do away with the remains of the Middle Ages and make men free…"[568]

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[565] Popper, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

[566] Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence, 1500 to the Present*, New York: Perennial, 2000, p. 508.

[567] Popper, op. cit., p. 63.

[568] Mann, op. cit., p. 78.

So from Hildebrand to Hegel we have come full circle: from the absolute dominion of the Church in all spheres, including the State, to the absolute dominion of the State in all spheres, including the Church. The theories of Hegel and the "Hegelians" found their incarnation in the State-worshipping creeds of Communism and Fascism, the most evil in history.

Such is the fall of western civilization, its thesis and antithesis. So far it has not found – or, more exactly, has not recovered (since it used to have it in the pre-schism, Orthodox period) - its synthesis. And until it does, only violent, destructive swings between thesis and antithesis can be expected…

IV. THE EAST: PATRIOTISM AND MASONRY

40. THE CHILDREN OF 1812

"The Jacobin reign of terror," writes Oliver Figes, "undermined Russia's belief in Europe as a source of progress and enlightenment. 'The "Age of Enlightenment"! I do not recognize you in blood and flames,' Karamzin wrote with bitterness in 1795. It seemed to him, as to many of his outlook, that a swathe of murder and destruction would 'lay waste to Europe', destroying the 'centre of all art and science and the precious treasures of the human mind.' Perhaps history was a futile cycle, not a path of progress after all, in which 'truth and error, virtue and vice, are constantly repeated'? Was it possible that 'the human species had advanced so far, only to be compelled to fall back again into the depths of barbarism, like Sisyphus' stone'?

"Karamzin's anguish was widely shared by the European Russians of his age. Brought up to believe that only good things came from France, his companions could now see only bad. Their worst fears appeared to be confirmed by the horror stories which they heard from the émigrés who had fled Paris for St. Petersburg. The Russian government broke off relations with revolutionary France. Politically the once Francophone nobility became Francophobes, as 'the French' became a byword for inconstancy and godlessness, especially in Moscow and the provinces, where Russian political customs and attitudes had always mixed with foreign convention. In Petersburg, where the aristocracy was totally immersed in French culture, the reaction against France was more gradual and complicated – there were many liberal noblemen and patriots (like Pierre Bezukhov in *War and Peace*) who retained their pro-French and Napoleonic views even after Russia went to war with France in 1805. The use of Gallicisms became frowned upon in the salons of St. Petersburg. Russian noblemen gave up Cliquot and Lafite for *kvas* and vodka, *haute cuisine* for cabbage soup.

"In this search for a new life on 'Russian principles' the Enlightenment ideal of a universal culture was finally abandoned for the national way. 'Let us Russians be Russians, not copies of the French,' wrote Princess Dashkova, 'let us remain patriots and retain the character of our ancestors.' Karamzin, too, renounced 'humanity' for 'nationality'. Before the French Revolution he had held the view that 'the main thing is to be, not Slavs, but men. What is good for Man, cannot be bad for the Russians; all that Englishmen or Germans have invented for the benefit of mankind belongs to me as well, because I am a man.' But by 1802 Karamzin was calling on his fellow writers to embrace the Russian language and 'become themselves': 'Our language is capable not only of lofty eloquence, of sonorous descriptive poetry, but also of tender simplicity, of sounds of feeling and sensibility. It is richer in harmonies than French; it lends itself better to effusions of the soul… Man and nations may begin with imitation but in time they must become themselves to have the right to say: 'I exist morally!'' Here was the rallying cry of a new nationalism that flourished in the era of 1812."[569]

For 1812 was not only a great military victory: it rekindled the religious and national consciousness of Russia. "As readers of *War and Peace* will know," writes Figes, "the war of 1812 was a vital watershed in the culture of the Russian aristocracy. It was a war of national liberation from the intellectual empire of the French – a moment when noblemen like the Rostovs and the Bolkonskys struggled to break free from the foreign conventions of their society and began new lives on Russian principles. This was no straightforward metamorphosis (and it happened much more slowly than in Tolstoy's novel, where the nobles rediscover their forgotten national ways almost overnight). Though anti-French voices had grown to quite a chorus in the first decade of the nineteenth century, the aristocracy was still immersed in the culture of the country against which they were at war. The salons of St. Petersburg were filled with young admirers of Bonaparte, such as Pierre Bezhukhov in *War and Peace.* The most fashionable set was that of Counts Rumiantsev and Caulaincourt, the French ambassador in Petersburg, the circle in which Tolstoy's Hélène moved. 'How can we fight the French?' asks Count Rostopchin, the Governor of Moscow, in *War and Peace*. 'Can we arm ourselves against our teachers and divinities? Look at our youths! Look at our ladies! The French are our Gods. Paris is our Kingdom of Heaven.' Yet even in these circles there was horror at Napoleon's invasion, and their reaction against all things French formed the basis of a Russian renaissance in life and art."[570]

In July, 1812, shortly after Napoleon had invaded Russia, Tsar Alexander visited Moscow. It "was calculated to shake the city from its torpor and also, in view of the French emperor's talent for rousing common people to revolt, to quell emergent pro-Napoleonic sympathies. In both respects, it was a success. Huge crowds pressed around the handsome sovereign wherever he went: the Kremlin itself was packed to the limits. In ballrooms and along the tree-lined boulevards, the pursuit of elegance gave way to a new fashion: patriotism. 'The dandies stopped showing off, 'a satirically minded Alexander Pushkin later wrote: 'Mr. so-and-so emptied his snuffbox of French stuff; another burnt a dozen French booklets; yet another gave up Chateau Lafitte and took to eating cabbage soup. They all vowed never to speak French again.' Many offered funds, serf-soldiers, and even their own services to the national cause. Purple silk tents were erected in the city's squares, and young men queued in jaunty lines to sign up for the tsar's army. At the same time, however, and despite the talk of Moscow's glory, others were making their plans to flee. It looked as if Napoleon might head their way instead of to St. Petersburg…"[571]

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[569] Figes, *Natasha's Dance,* London: Penguin, 2002, pp. 67-68.

[570] Figes, *Natasha's Dance,* London: Penguin, 2002, pp. 101-102.

[571] Catherine Merridale, *Red Fortress,* New York: Picador, 2013, pp. 207-208.

Countess Choiseul-Gouffier wrote about the Tsar's visit to Moscow: "These spontaneous impulses on the part of the people, impossible to counterfeit or provoke, are grand and sublime. They can exist only among those nations whose hearts continued near to nature and who are deeply impressed with religious ideas. Nations where the people are accustomed to seeing in their sovereign the representative of God whom they adore and upon whom they build their hopes of future happiness – all in the sentiments of obedience and fidelity to which they have consecrated themselves."[572]

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Historiography, too, adopted a patriotic and monarchist stance… We have already met Nikolai Karamzin (1766-1826), whose *Notes on Ancient and Modern Russia* appeared in 1811, taking an anti-European line and praising the Romanov dynasty even before Napoleon had crossed into Russia.

"The state that Karamzin envisaged was firmly rooted in the past, and history became a tool for exploiting its virtues. The historian's greatest work, his multivolume *History of the Russian State*, took decades to complete, but beyond the walls of his study, interest in the Russian past, almost always from a nationalist point of view, was gaining a wide popularity by 1812. An elite that had forgotten to read pre-Petrine script began the painful task of understanding it. A century after Peter the Great's alphabet reform, the documents he might have read with ease perplexed his successors and then fascinated them. Old papers were collected, stacked in wooden cupboards, pored over. The Society for the Study of Russian History and Antiquities was founded at Moscow University in 1904, and noble amateurs began to edit and publish medieval chronicles at the same time. Before the people's very eyes, a history that had been lost – its records burned, buried, or rendered indecipherable – were gradually and thrillingly, rediscovered. It would be years before the bones of Russia's real past were finally unearthed, but research had certainly become respectable…"[573]

At its simplest the Russian national renaissance consisted in noble army officers coming to appreciate the Russian peasants with whom they had marched all the way from Moscow to Paris. In the eighteenth century the main contact the nobility had had with the Russian peasants, their speech and their values, had been through their peasant nannies. As Orlando Figes shows, this was a vital influence on many nobles, preserving a kind of stream of Russian subconsciousness under their European consciousness.

As a result of 1812, this subconscious stream came more to the fore, manifested in the birth of a specifically Russian-language literature in the works of such "children of 1812" as the great poet Alexander Sergeyevich

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[572] Trubetzkoy, op. cit., p. 100.

[573] Merridale, *Red Fortress,* p. 205.

Pushkin. It was Pushkin who started the trend of looking back to childhood, when the influence of his peasant nanny had been dominant. Thus "compared with their parents, the Russian nobles who grew up after 1812 put a higher valuation on childhood. It took a long time for such attitudes to change, but already by the middle decades of the nineteenth century one can discern a new veneration of childhood on the part of those memoirists and writers who recalled their upbringing after 1812. This nostalgia for the age of childhood merged with a new reverence for the Russian customs which they had known as children through their father's household serfs."[574]

Again, the new focus on the Russian language, Russian customs and childhood influences merged with a new focus on history – beginning, of course, with the events of 1812 itself, but going much further back into the childhood of the nation.

"'Oh please, Nurse, tell me again how the French came to Moscow.' Thus Herzen starts his sublime memoir *My Past and Thoughts*, one of the greatest works of Russian literature. Born in 1812, Herzen had a special fondness for his nanny's stories of that year. His family had been forced to flee the flames that engulfed Moscow, the young Herzen carried out in his mother's arms, and it was only through a safe conduct from Napoleon himself that they managed to escape to their Yaroslavl estate. Herzen felt great 'pride and pleasure at [having] taken part in the Great War'. The story of his childhood merged with the national drama he so loved to hear: 'Tales of the fire of Moscow, of the battle of Borodino, of the Berezina, of the taking of Paris were my cradle songs, my nursery stories, my Iliad and my Odyssey.' For Herzen's generation, the myths of 1812 were intimately linked with their childhood memories. Even in the 1850s children were still brought up on the legends of that year. History, myth and memory were intertwined.

"For the historian Nikolai Karamzin, 1812 was a tragic year. While his Moscow neighbours moved to their estates, he refused to 'believe that the ancient holy city could be lost' and, as he wrote on 20 August, he chose to 'die on Moscow's walls'. Karamzin's house burned down in the fires and, since he had not thought to evacuate his library, he lost his precious books to the flames as well. But Karamzin saved one book – a bulging notebook that contained the draft of his celebrated *History of the Russian State* (1818-1826). Karamzin's masterpiece was the first truly national history – not just in the sense that it was the first by a Russian, but also in the sense that it rendered Russia's past as a national narrative. Previous histories of Russia had been arcane chronicles of monasteries and saints, patriotic propaganda, or heavy tomes of documents compiled by German scholars, unread and unreadable. But Karamzin's *History* had a literary quality that made its twelve large volumes a nationwide success. It combined careful scholarship with the narrative techniques of a novelist. Karamzin stressed the psychological motivations of his historical protagonists – even to the point of inventing them – so that his account became more compelling to a readership brought up on the literary conventions of Romantic texts. Medieval tsars like Ivan the Terrible or Boris Godunov became tragic figures in Karamzin's *History* – subjects for a modern psychological drama; and from its pages they walked on to the stage in operas by Mussorgsky and Rimsky Korsakov.

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[574] Figes, op. cit., p. 119.

"The first eight volumes of Karamzin's *History* were published in 1818. 'Three thousand copies were sold within a month – something unprecedented in our country. Everyone, even high-born ladies, began to read the history of their country,' wrote Pushkin. 'It was a revelation. You could say that Karamzin discovered ancient Russia as Columbus discovered America.' The victory of 1812 had encouraged a new interest and pride in Russia's past. People who had been raised on the old conviction that there was no history before the reign of Peter the Great began to look back to the distant past for the sources of their country's unexpected strengths. After 1812 history books appeared at a furious pace. Chairs were established in the universities (Gogol held one for a term at St. Petersburg). Historical associations were set up, many in the provinces, and huge efforts were suddenly devoted to the rescuing of Russia's past. History became the arena for all those troubling questions about Russia's nature and its destiny. As Belinsky wrote in 1846, 'we interrogate our past for an explanation of our present and a hint of our future'."[575]

"Karamzin's *History* was the opening statement in a long debate on Russia's past and future that would run right through its culture in the nineteenth century. Karamzin's own work was squarely situated in the monarchist tradition, which portrayed the Tsarist state and its noble servitors as a force for progress and enlightenment. The overarching theme of the *History* was Russia's steady advance towards the ideal of a unitary Imperial state whose greatness lay in the inherited wisdom of its Tsar and the innate obedience of its citizens. The Tsar and his nobles initiated change, while 'the people remain silent' (*'narod bezmolvstvuet'*), as Pushkin put it in the final stage direction of *Boris Godunov*. Pushkin shared Karamzin's statist view of Russian history – at least in his later years, after the collapse of his republican convictions (which were in any case extremely dubious) in 1825. In *The History of Pugachev* (1833) Pushkin emphasized the need for enlightened monarchy to protect the nation from the elemental violence ('cruel and merciless') of the Cossack rebel leader Pugachev and his peasant followers. By highlighting the role of paternal noblemen such as General Bibikov and Count Panin, who put down Pugachev yet pleaded with the Empress to soften her regime, Pushkin understood the national leadership of the old landed gentry from which he was so proud to descend…"[576]

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[575] Figes, op. cit., pp. 130-131.

[576] Figes, op. cit., p. 134.

Both of the major intellectual movements of the mid-century – the Slavophiles and the Westerners – may be said to have originated in this new passion for Russian history. The Slavophiles believed that the real Russia was to be found in the Orthodox medieval state that existed for many centuries before Peter the Great, while the Westerners believed that Russian history only really *began* with Peter and his westernizing reforms. However, both movements represented a turning away from the "pure" westernism of the eighteenth century. For both were speaking in Russian about Russia – and not merely about the upper classes, but about the whole people.

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1812 elicited more than patriotic feelings. The victory over Napoleon also elicited an explosion of specifically *religiou*s feeling, not least in the Tsar himself, who said: "The burning of Moscow enlightened my soul, and the judgement of God on the icy fields filled my heart with a warmth of faith such as I had not felt before. Then I came to know God as He is depicted in the Holy Scriptures. I am obliged to the redemption of Europe from destruction for my own redemption". All the crosses and medallions minted in memory of 1812, he said, were to bear the inscription: "Not to us, not to us, but to Thy name give the glory".[577]

God was teaching the Russians a most important lesson: that those western influences which had so inundated Russia in the century up to 1812, were evil and threatened to destroy Russia. As St. Theophan the Recluse wrote some generations later: "We are attracted by enlightened Europe… Yes, there for the first time the pagan abominations that had been driven out of the world were restored; then they passed and are passing to us, too. Inhaling into ourselves these poisonous fumes, we whirl around like madmen, not remembering who we are. But let us recall 1812: Why did the French come to us? God sent them to exterminate that evil which we had taken over from them. Russia repented at that time, and God had mercy on her."[578]

Tragically, however, the repentance was short-lived. Although the Masonic plans had been foiled, both Masonry and Protestantism continued to flourish. And discontent with the existing order was evident in both the upper and the lower classes. Thus the question arose of the emancipation of the peasants, who had played such a great part in the victory, voluntarily destroying their own homes and crops in order to deny them to the French. In return, they hoped for some kind of reward, but received none. "There was great bitterness," writes Hosking, "among peasants who returned from their militia service to find that there was no emancipation. Alexander, in his manifesto of

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[577] Dobroklonsky, op. cit., p. 666. For more on Alexander's religious feelings in this period, see Troubetzkoy, op. cit., pp. 105-106.

[578] Bishop Theophan, *Mysli na kazhdij den'* (Thoughts for every day), Moscow, 1881, Platina, Ca.: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 2010, p. 461.

30 August 1814, thanking and rewarding all his subjects for their heroic deeds, said of the peasants simply that they would 'receive their reward from God'…. Some nobles tried to persuade the authorities not to allow them back, but to leave them in the regular army as ordinary soldiers. The poet Gavriil Derzhavin was informed by his returnees that they had been 'temporarily released' and were now state peasants and not obliged to serve him. Rumours circulated that Alexander had intended to free them all, but had been invited to a special meeting of indignant nobles at night in the Senate, from which he had allegedly been rescued, pleading for his life, by his brother Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich…"[579]

Some peasants may have wanted emancipation and a share in the nobles' wealth. But they wanted it *with* the Tsar and *through* the Tsar, *not* as the expression of some egalitarian and anti-monarchist ideology. The French revolution in this, its imperialist, expansionist phase, overthrew many kingdoms and laid the seeds for the overthrow of still more. But it broke against the rock of the Russian people's faith in their God and their Tsar…

However, if the masses of the people were still Orthodox and loyal to the Tsar, this could not be said of the nobility. We have seen the extent to which Masonry penetrated the bureaucracy in the early part of Alexander's reign. Unfortunately, the triumphant progress of the Russian army into the heart of Masonry, Paris, did not destroy this influence, but only served to strengthen it. For, as Adam Zamoyski writes, "if nobles at home wanted to keep their serfs, the nobles who served as officers in the armies that occupied Paris were exposed to other, liberal influences. They had been brought up speaking French and reading the same literature as educated people in other countries. They could converse effortlessly with German and English allies as well as with French prisoners and civilians. Ostensibly, they were just like any of the Frenchmen, Britons and Germans they met, yet at every step they were made aware of profound differences. The experience left them with a sense of being somehow outside, almost unfit for participation in European civilization. And that feeling would have dire consequences…"[580]

Something of the atmosphere of St. Petersburg at that time can be gathered from the recollections of the future Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov), when he went there to teach in the newly reformed ecclesiastical schools in 1809. "The Synod greeted him with the advice to read 'Swedenborg's *Miracles*' and learn French. He was taken to court to view the fireworks and attend a masquerade party in order to meet Prince Golitsyn…, quite literally 'amidst the noise of a ball'… This was Philaret's first masquerade ball, and he had never before seen a domino. 'At the time I was an object of amusement in the Synod,' Philaret recalled, 'and I have remained a fool'"[581] – but a holy fool who would play a great part in formulating the Orthodox doctrine of the State in the next reign…

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[579] Hosking, op. cit., p. 137.

[580] Zamoyski, *Holy Madness: Romantics, Patriots and Revolutionaries, 1776-1871*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999, pp. 172-173.

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[581] Fr. Georges Florovsky, *The Ways of Russian Theology*, Belmont, 1979, part I, pp. 202-203.

41. THE POLISH QUESTION

Napoleon's creation of a semi-independent Duchy of Warsaw threatened to turn Poland from a buffer state protecting Russia into a dagger menacing her.[582] Not for nothing was a large part of Napoleon's invasion force composed of Poles…

"Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812," writes Serhii Plokhy, "was officially called the Polish campaign – the second Polish campaign, to be precise. In the first (1806-1807), Napoleon had defeated the Russian, Prussian, and Austrian troops and carved the Duchy of Warsaw out of the Prussian share of the Polish partition. The official goal of the second campaign was to restore the Kingdom of Poland, now including lands from the Russian sphere of the partitions. The implicit and, many believe, primary goal was to stop the Russian Empire from trading with Britain and thereby tighten the French economic blockade of Napoleon's British enemy. But an economic issue could hardly serve as a battle cry for the French armies or for potential allies in the region, who were ordered or asked to invade the Russian Empire and march all the way to Moscow. The undoing of a major historical injustice through the restoration of the Polish state could and did rouse the martial spirit, inspiring mass Polish participation in Napoleon's invasion of Russia and lending international legitimacy to the war.

"Although the third partition had wiped Poland off the political map of Europe, and the partitioning powers had agreed not to use the country's name in their titles or in the official names of the lands annexed as a result of the partitions, Poland had retained its place on the mental map of many Europeans – first and foremost, of course, the Poles themselves. Legend has it that upon his defeat at the hands of Russian troops in 1794, the leader of the Polish uprising, Tadeusz Kościuszko, exclaimed in desperation: 'Finis Poloniae!' He later denied having said those words, and many Poles indeed refused to consider their country lost. Some of them joined Napoleon's revolutionary army, fighting in the West Indies, Italy, and Egypt alongside the future emperor. Their marching song, later to become the national anthem of the restored Polish state, began with the words: 'Poland is not dead as long as we are alive'.

"Napoleon never forgot the loyalty of the Polish legionaries or the ultimate goal for which they were fighting. Addressing the Diet of the Duchy of Warsaw just before the invasion of Russia in June 1812, the emperor recalled the bravery of the Polish detachments in his army and his own readiness to fight for their cause. 'I love your nation,' declared the French emperor. 'For sixteen years now, I have seen your warriors fighting along with me on the fields of Italy and Spain. I applaud your deeds. I approved of all the efforts that you intend to make, and I will do everything in my power to support your intentions. If your endeavours are unanimous, then you may nourish the hope of forcing your enemies to recognize your rights.'

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[582] Hosking, *Russia and the Russians,* p. 250.

"The intentions and rights Napoleon had in mind were reflected in the appeal prepared a few days earlier by the Polish Diet. It read: 'We are restoring Poland on the basis of the right given to us by nature; on the associations of our ancestors; on the sacred right, acknowledged by the whole world, that was the baptismal font of the human race. It is not we alone, tasting the sweetness of Poland's resurrection, who are restoring her, but all the inhabitants of various lands awaiting their liberation… Regardless of their lengthy separation, the inhabitants of Lithuania, White Rus', Ukraine, Podolia, and Volhynia are our brethren. They are Poles, just as we are, and they the right to call themselves Poles.' Napoleon told the deputies that he could not violate the promises he had given to Austria and the peace he had concluded with her; hence, restoring the Austrian partition to Poland was out of the question. But there seemed to be no problem with the Russian one. 'Let Lithuania, Samogitia, Vitebsk, Polatsk, Mahilioŭ, Volhynia, Ukraine, and Podolia,' said Napoleon, 'be inspired with the same spirit that I encountered in Great Poland, and Providence will crown your sacred cause with success.'

"Later that month, Napoleon's Grand Army crossed the Russian border... As far as the Warsaw Poles were concerned, the war for the restoration of their fatherland and reunification with their Polish brethren in the Russian partition was on. Close to 100,000 Poles entered Napoleon's army – every sixth soldier serving in his Russian campaign was a Pole. Not surprisingly, the first major military encounter, in late June 1812, took place not between French and Russian troops but between Polish and Russian detachments. What the outside observer saw as the first test of forces between Napoleon and Alexander was in fact a battle between Polish cavalrymen and Cossacks. They were continuing their age-old struggle on familiar turf – the eastern provinces of the former Commonwealth. Although the Cossacks won, they had to retreat. Their whole operation was meant to gain time for the main Russian armies to withdraw to the interior, eventually leading Napoleon to the gates of Moscow…"[583]

The Poles, as Napoleon's closest allies, shared in the humiliation and disaster of 1812. But Tsar Alexander showed a noble refusal to take revenge. In December 1812, continues Plokhy, he "issued a manifesto in which he addressed the Poles as close relatives, almost brothers, offering amnesty to those who had fought against Russia in Napoleon's army. 'We hope,' declared Alexander, 'that this philoprogenitive and altruistic forgiveness of Ours will bring the guilty to wholehearted repentance and prove to all residents of these regions in general that they, as a people of one language and kin with the Russians from ancient times, can nowhere and never be so happy and secure as in complete merging in one body with mighty and magnanimous Russia.' The pan-Slavic idea of Russo-Polish brotherhood, first presented by the court poet Vasilii Petrov on the occasion of the second partition of Poland in 1793, was now reiterated and strengthened by the notion of linguistic affinity.

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[583] Plokhy, *Lost Kingdom*, London: Allen Lane, 2017, pp. 73-74.

"Alexander believed that he knew how to redeem the Poles. His solution was to establish the Kingdom (in Russian, Tsardom) of Poland, and it was approved by the Congress of Vienna... The kingdom was created out of the Polish lands taken over by Prussia, with its capital in Warsaw. Without renouncing his title of emperor of Russia, Alexander thus assumed the new title of tsar of Poland, thereby creating the semblance of a dynastic union to justify Russia's continued domination of that country. This was also a step toward the realization of his old dream of becoming a constitutional monarch: if he could not become one in Russia, perhaps he could so in Poland. He granted the kingdom quite a liberal constitution that provided for a Diet, a separate government and administrative structure, and even an army. Catherine's notion of making all parts of the empire homogeneous was discarded in favor of particularism, now under the banner of the Polish constitution. Alexander hoped that one day the rest of the empire would get its constitution as well. As things turned out, it would have to wait another ninety years.

"Alexander was hailed in Warsaw as a restorer of the Polish statehood. The Poles retained most of the territories given to them under Napoleon. But their enthusiasm for Alexander was short-lived, as the Polish government had no control over the kingdom's budget, military forces, or international trade. Besides, the tsar's officials exceeded their mandate, while the tsar's brother, Grand Duke Constantine, who was commander in chief of the Polish army, acquired a bad reputation among the Polish elites for his abusive behavior. On top of that, Warsaw had no authority over the former Polish lands acquired by Russia in the course of the partitions. The younger generation of Polish activists began to create clandestine organizations whose goals included the restoration of Poland in its pre-partition boundaries. The Russian authorities cracked down on the conspirators, adding to the general sense of dissatisfaction in the kingdom.

"Alexander's constitutional experiment was not going well, either in Poland or in the rest of the empire. Conservative sections of Russian society opposed the idea of constitutionalism as such. Progressives who wanted a constitution complained that the Poles had gotten one while the Russians had not. Persistent rumors about Alexander's plans to transfer to the kingdom the territories annexed by Russia in the second and third partitions aroused protests from both camps.

"In 1819, these concerns were voiced by Russia's most prominent historian of the day, Nikolai Karamzin. In a letter titled *The Opinion of a Russian Citizen*, Karamzin warned the tsar against what he saw as tantamount of a partition of Russia: 'Will they say that she [Catherine] divided Poland illegally? But you would act even more illegally if your should think of smoothing over her illegality by partitioning Russia itself.' He then pointed out how tricky the use of historical argument could be. 'There are no old fortresses in politics,' wrote Karamzin. 'Otherwise we would be obliged to restored the kingdoms of Kazan and Astrakhan, the public of Novgorod, the grand principality of Riazan, and so on. Moreover, even by virtue of old fortresses, Belarus, Volhynia, and Podolia, along with Galicia, were once original possessions of Russia. If you give them back, they will also demand Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Smolensk of you: after all, they, too, belonged to hostile Lithuania for a long time.'

"Karamzin, the author of the multivolume *History of the Russian State*, published in St. Petersburg between 1816 and 1826, did not confine himself to historical arguments in his letter. He maintained that the tsar who ruled both Russia and Poland had to choose and take the side of 'your true Fatherland – good, strong Russia'. With reference to the Polish elites of the annexed territories, he wrote: 'Lithuania and Volhynia want the Kingdom of Poland, but we want one Russian Empire'. Ceding those territories to the Kingdom of Poland would create a threat to Russia: 'Poles legally recognized as a separate and sovereign people are more dangerous to us than Pole-Russians.' Finally, Karamzin wanted no part of the pan-Slavic discourse that was popular at the time: 'No, Sire, the Poles will never be true brothers to us, nor faithful allies. Now they are weak and insignificant: if you strengthen them, they will want independence, and their first step will be to draw away from Russia – not in your reign, of course, but look beyond your own lifetime, Sire!'

"Karamzin turned out to be a prophet of sorts. There was no revolt in the Kingdom of Poland as long as Alexander was alive. But five years after his death, which came in 1825, the Poles were up in arms …"[584].

Alexander tried hard to help and placate the Poles. This was not a popular policy. For many of his Russian subjects "it was intolerable that a nation which had collaborated so flagrantly with Napoleon in 1812 should be the chief beneficiary of Russia's final victory… The Tsar's inconsistencies alienated the sympathies of his new subjects in the Congress Kingdom while failing to allay the suspicions of his old subjects that the Poles had in some way stolen a march on them. The contradictoriness of his half-solution of the Polish Question was to confound politics for the remainder of his reign and beyond…"[585]

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[584] Plokhy, *Lost Kingdom,* London: Allen Lane, 2017, pp. 76-78.

[585] Alan Palmer, *Alexander I,* London: Wedenfeld & Nicolson, 1974, pp. 341-342.

42. THE JEWISH QUESTION

If the Polish problem was difficult to solve, the Jewish problem was even more intractable. The two nations lived intertwined lives, for many of the Jews lived in Poland. And they had much in common: both were nations without states, distrustful of each other but united in their craving for national autonomy, both fiercely anti-Orthodox and both subjects of the same people, the Russians, whom they had both exploited in the not-so-distant past. The future of Europe, and Christian civilization in general, would to a large extent depend on how well Orthodox Russia would succeed in assimilating and neutralizing this breeding-ground of the Revolution…

Throughout the medieval and early modern periods, the Jews had been forbidden to settle in Russia. From the beginning of the Muscovite kingdom, however, they had begun to infiltrate into Russia from Poland-Lithuania, where the Polish landowners had given them considerable privileges, employing them to collect very heavy taxes, fees, tolls and produce from the Russian serfs. In some cases the Poles even handed over churches and monasteries to the Jews, who would extort fees for the celebration of sacraments.[586]

"In the 16th century," writes Solzhenitsyn, quoting Yury Hessen, "'the spiritual leadership of the Jewish world came to be concentrated in German-Polish Jewry… So as to prevent the possibility of the Jewish people being dissolved amidst the surrounding population, the spiritual leaders had from ages past introduced stipulations whose purpose was to isolate the people from close contact with their neighbours. Using the authority of the Talmud,… the Rabbis wrapped round the public and private life of the Jew with a complex web of prescriptions of a religio-social nature, which… prevented them getting close to people of other faiths.' Real and spiritual needs 'were brought in sacrifice to outdated forms of popular life', 'blind fulfilment of ritual was transformed for the people into the goal, as it were, of the existence of Jewry… Rabbinism, ossified in lifeless forms, continued to keep both the mind and the will of the people in fetters.'"[587]

In 1648, the Ukrainian Cossacks and peasants rose up against their Polish and Jewish oppressors and appealed to the Tsar for help. The Tsarist armies triumphed, and by the treaty of Andrusovo in 1667 Eastern Ukraine was ceded – together with its Jewish population – to Russia.[588]

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[586] Hieromonk Patapios, "A Traditionalist Critique of 'The Orthodox Church'", *Orthodox Tradition*, volume XVI, N 1, 1999, pp. 44-45.

[587] A.I. Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti Let Vmeste* (Two Hundred Years Together), Moscow, 2001, vol. 1, p. 34.

[588] 1667 was the very year in which Patriarch Nikon was unjustly deposed; so the first major influx of Jews into Russia coincided with the first serious undermining of Russian Church-State relations. (L.A. Tikhomirov, "Yevrei i Rossia" ("The Jews and Russia"), *Kritika Demokratii* (A Critique of Democracy), Moscow, 1997, p. 487).

For the next hundred years, writes Janet Hartley, these Jews of the Russian empire "lived mostly in the Ukraine although a small Jewish community became established in Moscow. The government legislated to contain and control the Jewish population within the empire's borders. Both Catherine I (1725-27) and Elizabeth (1741-62) attempted to ban Jews from Russia; one estimate is that 35,000 Jews were banished in 1741."[589]

From the second half of the eighteenth century, however, the universalism and cosmopolitanism of the Enlightenment, together with the principles of human and national rights of the French revolution, led to the emancipation of the Jews, first in France, and then in most of the countries of Europe. This process was slow and accompanied by many reverses and difficulties, but inexorable. The only great power which firmly resisted it was *Russia*….

Contrary to popular myth, the myth of its being "the prison of the peoples", the record of the Russian empire in its treatment of various subject populations was in general good. We only have to look at the large number of Baltic German names among the senior officials of the empire, the very large measure of autonomy given to the Finns (and to the Poles before they rebelled), and the way in which Tatar khans and Georgian princes were fully assimilated (or rather: assimilated to the degree that *they* wanted). In fact, Russia was probably more liberal, and certainly less racist, in its treatment of its subject peoples than its contemporary rival, the supposedly "liberal" empire of Great Britain.

But the Jews presented certain intractable problems not found in the other peoples of the empire. The first problem was the sheer *number* of Jews who suddenly found themselves within its boundaries. Thus Hartley writes: "The empire acquired a further *c.* 250,000 Jews after the establishment of the Congress Kingdom of Poland in 1815. There was a substantial Jewish population in Bessarabia (11.3 per cent in 1863). In 1854, the Jewish population of the whole empire was estimated as 1,062,132."[590] These numbers grew rapidly in the second half of the nineteenth century. And by the beginning of the twentieth century, according to Lebedev, *about half* the number of the Jews *in the whole world* were to be found in the Russian empire.

More fundamental, however, than the administrative problem presented by these large numbers was the fact that, as David Vital writes, "there were differences… between Russia and the other European states… in respect of the place of religion generally and what were taken to be the teachings of religion on what were unquestionably the state's affairs. It was not merely that in principle Russia continued to be held by its Autocrat and its minions to be a Christian state with a particular duty to uphold its own Orthodox Church. It was that, far from the matter of the state's specifically Christian duty slowly wasting away, as in the west, it continued actively to exercise the minds of Russia's rulers as one of the central criteria by which questions of public policy were to be judged and decided. The continuous search for an effective definition of the role, quality, and ultimate purposes of the Autocracy itself was an enterprise which, considering the energy and seriousness with which it was pursued, sufficed in itself to distinguish Russia from its contemporaries. The programmes to which the state was committed and all its structures were under obligation to promote varied somewhat over time. But in no instance was there serious deviation from the rule that Russian Orthodoxy was and needed to remain a central and indispensable component of the ruling ethos. Nineteenth-century imperial Russia was therefore an ideological state in a manner and to a degree that had become so rare as to be virtually unknown in Europe and would not be familiar again for at least a century…"[591]

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[589] Hartley, *A Social History of the Russian Empire, 1650-1825*, London and New York: Longman, 1999, p. 15.
[590] Hartley, op. cit., p. 15.

Moreover, if Russia was the last ideological state in Europe, the large numbers of Ashkenazi Jews that now came within the Russian empire constituted an ideological "state within the state" whose anti-christian books, rabbinic leaders and *kahal* institutions caused them to be bitterly hostile to everything that Russia stood for. To put it bluntly: if the Russians worshipped Christ, the Jews hated Him. And no amount of state intervention, whether in a liberal or illiberal, emancipatory or anti-emancipatory direction, could resolve this basic contradiction or defuse the hostile sentiments it aroused on both sides. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that, unlike the Orthodox Christians, who are taught to recognize and obey secular authorities even if they are not Orthodox, and not only out of fear but for conscience's sake (Romans 13.1-4), the Jews ultimately recognized no authorities beside their own, rabbinical ones. And if they did obey the Gentile powers, it was only because they had been taught that resistance was counter-productive, not because these powers had any *moral* authority over them.

This led the Jew, writes Vital, "to be deeply sceptical of civil authority of *all* kinds… The lasting effect of such scepticism was to leave him peculiarly independent in mind and social outlook. "Having no earthly masters to whom he thought he owed unquestioning political obedience (the special case of the Hasidic *rebbe* or *zaddik* and his devotees aside), '[the European Jew's] was… a spirit that, for his times, was remarkably free. Permitted no land, he had no territorial lord. Admitted to no guild, he was free of the authority of established master-craftsmen. Not being a Christian, he had neither bishop nor priest to direct him. And while he could be charged or punished for insubordination to state or sovereign, he could not properly be charged with disloyalty. Betrayal only entered into the life of the Jews in regard to their own community or, more broadly, to Jewry as a whole. It was to their own nation alone that they accepted that they owed undeviating loyalty."[592]

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[591] David Vital, *A People Apart: The Jews in Europe, 1789-1939*, Oxford University Press, 1999, pp. 86-87.

We have seen how important and harmful the internal Jewish authority of the *kahal* was considered to be by the enlightened Polish Jew Hourwitz. The Tsar's servants were soon to make this discovery for themselves. Tsar Paul I appointed the poet and state official Gavriil Romanovich Derzhavin to investigate why Belorussia had been afflicted by such a severe famine. After visiting Belorussia twice in 1799 and 1800, Derzhavin came to the conclusion that the main cause of the famine was the desperate poverty into which the Jewish tavern-keepers and money-lenders, in connivance with the Polish landowners, had reduced the Belorussian peasants.[593]

But more importantly, writes Platonov, Derzhavin "noted the ominous role of the *kahals* – the organs of Jewish self-rule on the basis of the bigoted laws of the Talmud, which 'a well-constructed political body must not tolerate', as being a state within the state. Derzhavin discovered that the Jews, who considered themselves oppressed, established in the Pale of Settlement a secret Israelite kingdom divided into *kahal* districts with *kahal* administrations endowed with despotic power over the Jews which inhumanly exploited the Christians and their property on the basis of the Talmud. … [594]

"Derzhavin also uncovered the concept of 'herem' – a curse which the *kahal* issued against all those who did not submit to the laws of the Talmud. This, according to the just evaluation of the Russian poet, was 'an impenetrable sacrilegious cover for the most terrible crimes'.

"In his note Derzhavin 'was the first to delineate a harmonious, integral programme for the resolution of the Jewish question in the spirit of Russian statehood, having in mind the unification of all Russian subjects on common ground'.

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[592] Vital, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

[593] Solzhenitsyn writes, quoting Derzhavin, that "some 'landowners, giving the sale of wine on franchise to the Jews in their villages, are making agreements with them that their peasants should buy nothing that they needed from anyone else, and should take loans from nobody except these tax-farmers [three times more expensive], and should sell none of their products to anyone except these same Jewish tax-farmers… cheaper than the true price'" (op. cit., p. 47).

[594] In 1800, I.G. Friesel, governor of Vilna, reported: "Having established their own administrative institution, called Synagogues, Kahals, or associations, the Jews completely separated themselves from the people and government of the land. As a result, they were exempt from the operation of the statutes which governed the peoples of the several estates, and even if special laws were enacted, these remained unenforced and valueless, because the ecclesiastical and temporal leaders of the Jews invariably resisted them and were clever enough to find means to evade them." (Isaac Levitats, *The Jewish Community in Russia, 1772-1844*, New York, 1970, p. 29; quoted in Hartley, op. cit., pp. 98-99). (V.M.)

"Paul I, after reading the note, agreed with many of its positions and decorated the author. However, the tragic death of the Tsar as the result of an international Masonic conspiracy destroyed the possibility of resolving the Jewish question in a spirit favourable for the Russian people. The new Emperor, Alexander I, being under the influence of a Masonic environment, adopted a liberal position. In 1802 he created a special Committee for the improvement of the Jews, whose soul was the Mason Speransky, who was closely linked with the Jewish world through the well-known tax-farmer Perets, whom he considered his friend and with whom he lived.

"Another member of the committee was G.R. Derzhavin. As general-governor, he prepared a note 'On the removal of the deficit of bread in Belorussia, the collaring of the avaricious plans of the Jews, on their transformation, and other things'. Derzhavin's new note, in the opinion of specialists, was 'in the highest degree a remarkable document, not only as the work of an honourable, penetrating statesman, but also as a faithful exposition of all the essential sides of Jewish life, which hinder the merging of this race with the rest of the population.'

"In the report of the official commission on the Jewish question which worked in the 1870s in the Ministry of the Interior, it was noted that at the beginning of the reign of Alexander I the government 'stood already on the ground of the detailed study of Jewry and the preparation that had begun had already at that time exposed such sides of the public institutions of this nationality which would hardly be tolerable in any state structure. But however often reforms were undertaken in the higher administrative spheres, every time some magical brake held up the completion of the matter.' This magical brake stopped Derzhavin's proposed reform of Jewry, which suggested the annihilation of the *kahals* in all the provinces populated by Jews, the removal of all *kahal* collections and the limitation of the influx of Jews to a certain percentage in relation to the Christian population, while the remaining masses were to be given lands in Astrakhan and New Russia provinces, assigning the poorest to re-settlement. Finally, he proposed allowing the Jews who did not want to submit to these restrictions freedom to go abroad. However, these measures were not confirmed by the government.

"Derzhavin's note and the formation of the committee elicited great fear in the Jewish world. From the published *kahal* documents of the Minsk Jewish society it becomes clear that the *kahals* and the 'leaders of the cities' gathered in an extraordinary meeting three days later and decided to sent a deputation to St. Petersburg with the aim of petitioning Alexander I to make no innovations in Jewish everyday life. But since this matter 'required great resources', a very significant sum was laid upon the whole Jewish population as a tax, refusal from which brought with it 'excommunication from the people' (herem). From a private note given to Derzhavin by one Belorussian landowner, it became known that the Jews imposed their herem also on the general procurator, uniting with it a curse through all the *kahals* 'as on a persecutor'. Besides, they collected 'as gifts' for this matter, the huge sum for that time of a million rubles and sent it to Petersburg, asking that 'efforts be made to remove him, Derzhavin, from his post, and if that was not possible, at any rate to make an attempt on his life'."[595]

Not surprisingly, Tsar Alexander's Statute for the Jews of December 9, 1804 turned out to be fairly liberal – much more liberal than the laws of Frederick Augustus in Napoleon's Duchy of Warsaw. Its strictest provisions related to a ban on Jews' participation in the distilling and retailing of spirits. Also, "there was to be no relaxation of the ancient rule that Jews (negligible exceptions apart[596]) were to be prevented from penetrating into 'inner Russia'. Provision was made for an eventual, but determined, attack on the rabbinate's ancient – but in the government's view presumptuous and unacceptable – practice of adjudicating cases that went beyond the strict limits of the religious (as opposed to the civil and criminal domain), but also on rabbinical independence and authority generally….[597]

"But the Jews themselves could take some comfort in it being expressly stated that there was to be no question of forcible conversion to Christianity; that they were not to be oppressed or harassed in the observance of their faith and in their general social activities; that the private property of the Jews remained inviolable; and that Jews were not to be exploited or enserfed. They were, on the contrary, to enjoy the same, presumably full protection of the law that was accorded other subjects of the realm. They were not to be subject to the legal jurisdiction of the landowners on whose estates they might happen to be resident. And they were encouraged in every way the Committee could imagine – by fiscal and other economic incentives, for example, by the grant of land and loans to develop it, by permission to move to the New Russian Territories in the south – to undergo decisive and (so it was presumed) irreversible change in the two central respects which both Friezel and Derzhavin had indeed, and perfectly reasonably, regarded as vital: education and employment. In this they were to be encouraged very strongly; but they were not to be forced…"[598]

However, the liberal Statute of 1804 was never fully implemented, and was succeeded by stricter measures towards the end of Alexander's reign and in the reign of his successor, Nicholas I. There were many reasons for this. Among them, of course, was Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1812, which, if it had been successful, would have united the Western Sephardic Jews with the Eastern Ashkenazi Jews in a single State, free, emancipated, and under their own legally convened Sanhedrin. But not only did Napoleon not succeed: the invasion of Russia was the graveyard of his empire. In 1813, and again in 1815, the Russian armies entered Paris. From now on, the chief target of the Jews' hatred in both East and West would be the Russian Empire…

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[595] Platonov, op. cit., pp. 242, 243-245.

[596] In fact they were not negligible at all. The Pale of Settlement was exceedingly porous!

[597] The *kahal* was abolished in 1821 in Poland and in 1844 in the rest of the Russian empire.

[598] Vital, op. cit., pp. 95-96.

But the main reason for the tightening of Russian policy was "the Jews' abhorrence of Christianity, the intensely negative light in which non-Jewish society had always been regarded, and the deeply ingrained suspicion and fear in which all forms of non-Jewish authority were commonly held."[599] As a result, in the whole of the 19th century only 69,400 Jews converted to Orthodoxy.[600] If the freethinking French delegates who emancipated French Jewry could ignore this fact, the Russian Tsars could not.[601]

The Tsars' gradual tightening of policy had little or no effect on the basic problem of religious and social antagonism. As Platonov writes: "The statute of the Jews worked out in 1804, which took practically no account of Derzhavin's suggestion, continued to develop the isolation of the Jewish communities on Russian soil, that is, it strengthened the *kahals* together with their fiscal, judicial, police and educational independence. However, the thought of re-settling the Jews out of the western region continued to occupy the government after the issuing of the statute in 1804. A consequence of this was the building in the New Russian area (from 1808) of Jewish colonies in which the government vainly hoped to 're-educate' the Jews, and, having taught them to carry out productive agricultural labour, to change in this way the whole structure of their life. Nevertheless, even in these model colonies the *kahal*-rabbinic administration retained its former significance and new settlements isolated themselves from the Christian communities; they did not intend to merge with them either in a national or in a cultural sense. The government not only did not resist the isolation of the Jews, but even founded for them the so-called Israelite Christians (that is, Talmudists who had converted to Orthodoxy). A special committee existed from 1817 to 1833."[602]

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[599] Vital, op. cit., p. 105.

[600] Vladimir Gubanov (ed.), *Nikolai II-ij i novie mucheniki (Nicholas II and the New Martyrs),* St. Petersburg, 2000, p. 698. Gubanov took this figure from the Jewish Encyclopaedia.

[601] Nor did the Jews receive emancipation from the great powers at the Congress of Vienna, although their situation had made it onto the agenda (Zamoyski, *Rites of Peace,* p. 568).

[602] Platonov, op. cit., p. 245.

43. THE REACTION AGAINST MASONRY

After 1812 all kinds of pseudo-religious mysticism flooded into Russia from the West (this was the period of the Prussian neo-Pietist, charismatic "Awakening"). There was, writes N. Elagin, "a veritable inundation of 'mystical' and pseudo-Christian ideas… together with the 'enlightened' philosophy that had produced the French Revolution. Masonic lodges and other secret societies abounded; books containing the Gnostic and millenarian fantasies of Jacob Boehme, Jung-Stilling, Eckhartshausen and other Western 'mystics' were freely translated into Russian and printed for distribution in all the major cities of the realm; 'ecumenical' salons spread a vague teaching of an 'inner Christianity' to the highest levels of Russian society; the press censorship was under the direction of the powerful Minister of Spiritual Affairs, Count Golitsyn, who patronized every 'mystical' current and stifled the voice of traditional Orthodoxy by his dominance of the Holy Synod as Procurator; the Tsar Alexander himself, fresh from his victory over Napoleon and the formation of a vaguely religious 'Holy Alliance' of Western powers, favored the new religious currents and consulted with 'prophetesses' and other religious enthusiasts; and the bishops and other clergy who saw what was going on were reduced to helpless silence in the face of the prevailing current of the times and the Government's support of it, which promised exile and disgrace for anyone who opposed it. Many even of those who regarded themselves as sincere Orthodox Christians were swept up in the spiritual 'enthusiasm' of the times, and, trusting their religious feelings more than the Church's authority and tradition, were developing a new spirituality, foreign to Orthodoxy, in the midst of the Church itself. Thus, one lady of high birth, Ekaterina P. Tatarinova, claimed to have received the gift of 'prophecy' on the very day she was received into the Orthodox Church (from Protestantism), and subsequently she occupied the position of a 'charismatic' leader of religious meetings which included the singing of Masonic and sectarian hymns (while holding hands in a circle), a peculiar kind of dancing and spinning when the 'Holy Spirit' would come upon them, and actual 'prophecy' – sometimes for hours at a time. The members of such groups fancied that they drew closer to the traditions of Orthodoxy by such meetings, which they regarded as a kind of restoration of the New Testament Church for 'inward' believers, the 'Brotherhood in Christ', as opposed to the 'outward' Christians who were satisfied with the Divine services of the Orthodox Church… The revival of the perennial 'charismatic' temptation in the Church, together with a vague 'revolutionary' spirit imported from the West, presented a danger not merely to the preservation of true Christianity in Russia, but to the very survival of the whole order of Church and State…"[603]

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[603] Elagin, "The Life of Countess Anna Orlova-Chesmenskaya", *The Orthodox Word*, 1977, vol. 13, N 6 (77), pp. 240-241. V.N. Zhmakin writes: "From 1812 there began with us in Russia a time of the domination of extreme mysticism and pietism… The Emperor Alexander became a devotee of many people simultaneously, from whatever quarter they declared their

This mystical current was aided by what at first would seem to be a completely different, "drier", kind of religious phenomenon. The Tsar, who did much to found new institutions of higher education for upper-class Russians, also wanted the Holy Scriptures to be available to all the peoples of his empire in their native languages. "For this purpose he encouraged the establishment of the Imperial Russian Bible Society in December 1812, as a [largely autonomous] branch of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to undertake the work of translation, publication and distribution.

"The steering committee of the Bible Society brought together representatives of different Christian churches, including a Roman Catholic bishop and a Lutheran pastor. To avoid inter-denominational conflict, they agreed to publish the various editions of the Bible without commentary."[604] Its first general meeting took place on 11 January 1813 with Prince Golitsyn, as president. It was very successful, and within a decade had published over 700,000 Bibles in forty-three languages and dialects, including German, Finnish, Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Polish, Armenian, Georgian, Kalmyk and Tatar.[605] Only there was no translation into Russian because Church

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religious enthusiasm… He protected the preachers of western mysticism, the Catholic paters… Among the first of his friends and counsellors was Prince A.N. Golitsyn, who was over-procurator of the Synod from 1803… Prince Golitsyn was the complete master of the Russian Orthodox Church in the reign of Alexander I… Having received no serious religious education, like the majority of aristocrats of that time, he was a complete babe in religious matters and almost an ignoramus in Orthodoxy… Golitsyn, who understood Orthodoxy poorly, took his understanding of it only from its external manifestations… His mystical imagination inclined in favour of secrecy, fancifulness, originality… He became simultaneously the devotee of all the representatives of contemporary mysticism, such as Mrs. Krunder, the society of Quakers, Jung Schtilling, the pastors… etc. Moreover, he became the pitiful plaything of all the contemporary sectarians, all the religious utopians, the representatives of all the religious theories, beginning with the Masons and ending with the … eunuch Selivanov and the half-mad Tatarinova. In truth, Prince Golitsyn at the same time protected the mystics and the pietists, and gave access into Russia to the English missionaries, and presented a broad field of activity to the Jesuits, who, thanks to the protection of the Minister of Religious Affairs, sowed a large part of Russia with their missions… He himself personally took part in the prayer-meetings of the Quakers and waited, together with them, for the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, he himself took part in the religious gatherings of Tatarinova, which were orgies reminiscent of the Shamans and khlysts…. Thanks to Prince Golitsyn, mystical literature received all rights of citizenship in Russia – works shot through with mystical ravings were distributed en masse… By the direct order of Prince Golitsyn all the more significant mystical works and translations were distributed to all the dioceses to the diocesan bishops. In some dioceses two thousand copies of one and the same work were sent to some dioceses… Prince Golitsyn… acted… in the name of the Holy Synod… and in this way contradicted himself;… the Synod as it were in its own name distributed works which actually went right against Orthodoxy…. He strictly persecuted the appearance of such works as were negatively oriented towards mysticism… Many of the simple people, on reading the mystical works that came into their hands, … were confused and perplexed." ("Eres' esaula Kotel'nikova" ("The Heresy of Cossack Captain Kotelnikov"), *Khristianskoe Chtenie* (Christian Reading), November-December, 1882, pp. 739-745)

[604] Hosking, op. cit., p. 139.

[605] Hosking, *Russia and the Russians,* p. 253.

Slavonic was considered better capable of conveying the truth and dignity of the Scripture… By the end of 1823 there were 300 Bible societies in Russia.

However, "the publication of mystical books by prominent member of the Bible Society cast a fatal shadow on the Society's work on the Bible. There were sufficient grounds to regard the Bible Society as something more or other than what it claimed to be. Very many people with extreme views and scarcely concealed hopes and intentions belonged to the Society, often in leading and responsible positions or roles. By statute and design the Bible Society was to embrace all confessions, so that all 'confessions' might be represented in the Society as equally possessed by the sanctity of God's Word. In fact, the Bible Society became something like a new confession or sect (at least psychologically) with the peculiarly esoteric and exalted cast of mind of a 'circle'. Sturdza somewhat justifiably called the Bible Society 'exotic' and labeled it 'the Anglo-Russian sect'. Many of the prominent members of the Bible Society, notably its secretary V.M. Popov, participated in Madame Tatarinova's circle of 'spiritual alliance'. Very often religious toleration metamorphosed as patronage for sectarians, especially for the Dukhobors and Molokans, but even for the Skoptsy. Mystical books, particularly Jung-Stilling and Eckartshausen, found ready acceptance in this milieu. In any case, 'formal church life' was very often denounced with the expectation that such 'worn out altar cloths' might be cut away, thereby revealing a true and inner Christianity. One can read Jung-Stilling on the 'absurd and superstitious blindness of those who profess the Eastern Greek-Catholic confession, which must be driven out with the light of the Divine book.'"[606]

As V.F. Ivanov writes: "Under the mask of love for one's neighbour and the spreading of the word of God, the bible societies began to conduct oral propaganda and publish books directed against [the Orthodox Christian] religion and the State order. These books were published under the management of the censor, which was attached to the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and Popular Enlightenment, which was headed by the Emperor Alexander's close friend, Prince A.N. Golitsyn. The main leaders of the Bible societies were members of the Masonic lodges, who preached the rejection of Orthodoxy, the Church and the rites of the Church. In 1819 there was published Stankevich's book, 'A conversation in the coffin of a child', which was hostile to the institution of the Orthodox Church…

"The Orthodox clergy were silent. They could not speak against the evil that was being poured out everywhere…"[607]

"Golitsyn," writes Oleg Platonov, "invited to the leadership of the Bible Society only certain hierarchs of the Russian Church that were close to him. He *de facto* removed the Holy Synod from participation in this matter. At the same time he introduced into it secular and clerical persons of other confessions, as if underlining that 'the aim of the Society is higher than the interests of one, that is the Russian Church, and that it develops its activities in the interests of the whole of Christianity and the whole of the Christian world'.

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[606] Florovsky, op. cit., p. 184.

[607] Ivanov, op. cit., p. 278.

"As the investigator of the Bible Society I.A. Chistovich wrote in 1873 [*Istoria perevoda Biblii na russkij iazyk (A History of the Translation of the Bible into Russian)*, St. Petersburg, pp. 50-55], 'this indifferent cosmopolitanism in relation to the Church, however pure its preachers might be in their ideal simplicity of heart, was, however, an absurdity at that, as at any other time. Orthodoxy is, factually speaking, the existing form of the Christian faith of the Greco-Russian Church, and is completely in accord with the teaching and statutes of the Ancient Universal Church. Therefore Christianity in its correct ecclesiastical form only exists in the Orthodox Church and cannot have over or above it any other idea… But the Bible Society was directed precisely against such an ideal, and they sought it out or presupposed it.'

"In an official document of the Bible Society the ideas of Masonic ecumenism were openly declared. 'The heavenly union of faith and love,' it says in a report of the Russian Bible Society in 1818, 'founded by means of Bible Societies in the great Christian family, reveal the beautiful dawn of the wedding day of Christians and that time when there will be one pastor and one flock, that is, when there will be one Divine Christian religion in all the various formations of Christian confessions.'

"The well-known Russian public figure, the academic A.S. Shishkov wrote on this score: 'Let us look at the acts of the Bible Societies, let us see what they consist of. It consists in the intention to construct out of the whole human race one general republic or other and one religion – a dreamy and undiscriminating opinion, born in the minds either of deceivers or of the vainly wise… If the Bible Societies are trying only to spread piety, as they say, then why do they not unite with our Church, but deliberately act separate from her and not in agreement with her? If their intention consists in teaching Christian doctrines, does not our Church teach them to us? Can it be that we were not Christians before the appearance of the Bible Societies? And just how do they teach us this? They recruit heterodox teachers and publish books contrary to Christianity!… Is it not strange – even, dare I say it, funny – to see our metropolitans and hierarchs in the Bible Societies sitting, contrary to the apostolic rules, together with Lutherans, Catholics, Calvinists and Quakers – in a word, with all the heterodox? They with their grey hairs, and in their cassocks and klobuks, sit with laymen of all nations, and a man in a frock suit preaches to them the Word of God (of God as they call it, but not in fact)! Where is the decency, where the dignity of the church server? Where is the Church? They gather in homes where there often hang on the walls pictures of pagan gods or lascivious depictions of lovers, and these gatherings of theirs

– which are without any Divine services, with the reading of prayers or the Gospel, sitting as it were in the theatre, without the least reverence – are equated with Church services, and a house without an altar, unconsecrated, where on other days they feast and dance, they call the temple of God! Is this not similar to Sodom and Gomorrah?'"[608]

At this critical moment for Russian Orthodoxy, God raised up righteous defenders of the faith in the persons of Metropolitan Michael (Desnitsky) and Archimandrite Innocent (Smirnov). Metropolitan Michael protested at Golitsyn's removal of the censorship of spiritual books from the Holy Synod, which meant giving free expression to the pseudo-mystical sects. There were stormy scenes between the prince and the metropolitan in the Synod. Innocent was given an honourable exile from the capital and given the see of Penza. Both Innocent and Michael soon died. Two weeks before his death, Michael wrote to the Emperor: "Your Majesty, when this epistle reaches you, I will no longer be in this world. I have communicated nothing except the truth to people, especially now, when in my actions I am preparing to give an account to the Supreme Judge"

"As a Member of the Synod, the hierarch Philaret was witness to the heated speeches of Metropolitan Michael in defence of the Church and undoubtedly approved of his actions. In his eyes the first-ranking hierarch was rightly considered to be a pillar of the Orthodox Church, restraining the onslaught of false mysticism. And when this pillar collapsed[609], and the storms did not die down, Philaret, like many others, was seized by fear for the destiny of the Church. Under the influence of a vision seen by someone concerning Metropolitan Michael, a sorrowful picture of Church life, full of misery and darkness, was revealed. He believed that in such a situation only a person possessing the spirit and power of the Prophet Elijah could work with benefit for the Church. However, the holy hierarch was profoundly convinced that the Church was supported, not by people, but by the Lord. And since he saw that it was impossible to save the Church only by human efforts, without the help of God, he decided that it was better for him to withdraw himself from everything as far as he could. Evidently, Philaret preferred a different method of warfare with various kinds of heterodox preachers and sectarian societies from that employed by Metropolitan Michael. And these methods were: a correct organization of the spiritual schools throughout Russia and the spiritual enlightenment of the Russian people through the distribution of Orthodox spiritual literature…"[610]

However, while Philaret withdrew to concentrate on spiritual education, a man with the spirit and strength of the Prophet Elijah was found. Fr. Photius

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[608] Platonov, op. cit., pp. 262-263.

[609] (V.M.)

[610] Snychev, op. cit., pp. 148-149.

(Spassky), later archimandrite of the Yuriev monastery near Novgorod, began his open defence of Orthodoxy in 1817.

"Bureaucratic and military Petersburg were angry with the bold reprover. His first speech was unsuccessful. Photius' struggle… against the apostates from Orthodoxy, the followers of the so-called inner Church, ended with his expulsion from Petersburg.

"After the expulsion of Photius the Masons celebrated their victory. But the joy of the conquerors turned out to be short-lived. The exile was found to have followers. Photius received special support at a difficult time of his life from the great righteous woman, Countess Anna Alexeevna Orlova-Chesmenskaia, who presented a model of piety. She not only protected him, but chose him as her leader and confessor. The firmness and courage with which Photius fought against the enemies of Orthodoxy attracted the mind and heart of Countess Orlova, a woman of Christian humility and virtue. After the death of her instructor, Countess Orlova explained why it was Photius whom she chose as her spiritual director. 'He attracted my attention,' wrote Countess Orlova, 'by the boldness and fearlessness with which he, being a teacher of the law of God at the cadet corps and a young monk, began to attack the dominant errors in faith. Everybody was against him, beginning with the Court. He did not fear this. I wanted to get to know him and entered into correspondence with him. His letters seemed to me to be some kind of apostolic epistles. After getting to know him better, I became convinced that he personally sought nothing for himself.'"[611]

However, the struggle against Masonry was helped by other events: the revolutionary activity in the Polish and Russian lodges, and the demonstration by Metternich at the Congress of the Sacred Alliance in Verona in 1822, "on the basis of Masonic documents that had unexpectedly fallen into his possession, that the secret societies of all countries, being in constant communication with each other, constituted *one common plot*, which was subject *only* to the secret leaders, and only for form's sake accepted different programmes in different countries, depending on circumstances and conditions. He was supported by the Prussian minister, Count Haugwitz, who himself had formerly been a Mason. He made a detailed report in which he showed that the 'enmity' of various unions of Masonry was only for show, to divert attention. In actual fact Masonry in its depths was one and its aim was *the subjection of the world,* and in the first place the subjection of the monarchs, so that they become weapons in the hands of the Masons. Haugwitz added that since 1777 he had *personally ruled* not only a part of the Prussian lodges, but also Masonry in Poland and Russia! We can imagine how shocked his Majesty Alexander I was as he sat in the hall... Everybody was stunned. The Austrian Emperor Frantz and the Russian Emperor Alexander I decided to attack this great evil. In 1822 *Masonry was forbidden in*

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[611] Ivanov, op. cit., p. 280.

Russia by a decree of the Tsar. The lodges were disbanded, the 'brothers" correspondence with abroad was strictly forbidden. At the same time this was the third powerful blow that shook the soul of Alexander I with the collapse of his faith in the nobility of the Masonic ideas and strivings. Strict censorship was introduced, especially in the publication of books of a spiritual nature. *Now* his Majesty began to pay attention to the rebukes of Masonry and mysticism issuing from Archimandrite Innocent, who had suffered earlier for this, of the metropolitan of the capital Michael, Metropolitan Seraphim who succeeded him, and also of the zealous defender of Orthodoxy Archimandrite Photius (Spassky)… Seraphim and Photius, joining forces, were able to show Alexander the danger for Orthodoxy of 'fashionable' tendencies in thought, the harmfulness of the activity of Prince Golitsyn, and *return the heart of the Tsar to Holy Orthodoxy.* A visit to Valaam monastery, conversations with Vladyka Seraphim, with Elder Alexis of the Alexander Nevsky Lavra made a great impression on Alexander and showed him that what his exalted soul had sought throughout his life was contained in the experience, rules and methods of Orthodox asceticism, which was just then experiencing an unusual ascent, being armed with such books as *The Philokalia* and others, especially on the doing of the Jesus prayer ('Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner!'). This was Alexander's fourth powerful spiritual shock. It had two kinds of consequences. When, in April, 1824, after many fruitless exhortations, Archimandrite Photius publicly (in a private house) pronounced 'anathema' on Prince Golitsyn and the latter retired, his Majesty accepted his retirement."[612]

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[612] Lebedev, *Velikorossia,* p. 289. "In 1822 Prince A.N. Golitsyn became acquainted with Photius and tried to incline him to his side. The meetings of Prince Golitsyn with Archimandrite Photius made a great impression on the former, which he noted in his letters to Countess Orlova. In these letters to Countess Orlova Prince Golitsyn calls Photius 'an unusual person' and recognises that 'the edifying conversation of Photius has a power that only the Lord could give'. In one of his letters to Countess Orlova Prince Golitsyn expresses regret that he cannot enjoy the conversation of 'our Chrysostom' and that he 'wants to quench my thirst with pure water drawn up by a pure hand and not by the hand of one who communicates to others stingily.'

"Prince Golitsyn's attempt by subtle flattery to bring the Archimandrite to his side was unsuccessful. A rapprochement and union between Archimandrite Photius, a pure and true zealot of Orthodoxy, with Prince Golitsyn, an enemy of the faith and the Church, was impossible.

"On April 22, 1822 Archimandrite Photius went to Petersburg. There his 'great toil' began. Every day, according to the witness of Archimandrite Photius himself, he was called to various people to talk about the Lord, the Church, the faith, and the salvation of the soul. Eminent and learned noblemen and noblewomen gathered to hear him talk about the Lord. But such conversations took place especially in the house of the virgin Anna, Abba Photius' daughter, of the noblewoman Daria Derzhavina, and sometimes in the Tauris palace.

"Without fear or hypocrisy Photius reproved the enemies of Orthodoxy.

"Once in 1822 Archimandrite Photius began to reprove Golitsyn, who could not stand it and began to leave the living-room, but Photius loudly shouted after him: 'Anathema! Be accursed! Anathema!'

"By this time the Emperor Alexander himself returned.

"Rumours about the cursing of Prince Golitsyn had reached the ears of the Emperor, and he demanded that Photius come and explain himself. At first the Emperor received the

Archimandrite Photius wrote: "the Masonic faith is of Antichrist, and its whole teaching and writings are of the devil".[613] In the spring of 1824 he wrote "two epistles to his Majesty. In one of them he said that 'in our time many books, and many societies and private people are talking about some kind of *new religion*, which is supposedly pre-established for the last times. This new religion, which is preached in various forms, sometimes under the form of a new world…, sometimes of a new teaching, sometimes of the coming of Christ in the Spirit, sometimes of the union of the churches, sometimes under the form of some renewal and of Christ's supposed thousand-year reign, sometimes insinuated under the form of a so-called new religion – is apostasy from the faith of God, the faith of the apostles and the fathers. It is faith in the coming Antichrist, it is propelling the revolution, it is thirsting for blood, it is filled with the spirit of Satan. Its false-prophets and apostles are Jung-Stilling, Eckartshausen, Thion, Bohme, Labzin, Fessler and the Methodists…'

"His Majesty was favourably disposed to the epistle of Archimandrite Photius in spite of the fact that it contained criticism of all his recent friends and of the people who had enjoyed his protection. Almost at the same time there appeared the book of Gosner, about whose harmful line Archimandrite Photius had reported to his Majesty on April 17, 1824.

"On April 20, 1824, Emperor Alexander received Photius, who was ordered: 'Come by the secret entrance and staircase into his Majesty's study so that nobody should know about this'. Their conversation lasted for three hours, and on May 7 Photius sent his second epistle with the title: 'Thoroughly correct the work of God. The plan for the revolution published secretly, or the secret iniquities practised by secret societies in Russia and everywhere.'

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fearless reprover threateningly, but then he changed his wrath for mercy. The Emperor was struck by the bold speech of the simple monk against the lofty official, who also happened to be a close friend of the Emperor himself. Photius described Golitsyn to the Emperor as an atheist, and the Bible Society headed by him - as a nest of faithlessness that threatened to overthrow the Orthodox Church. At the end of the conversation Photius began to speak to the Emperor about what was most necessary.

"These are his remarkable words:

"'The enemies of the holy Church and Kingdom have greatly strengthened themselves; evil faith and temptations are openly and boldly revealing themselves, they want to create evil secret societies that are a great harm to the holy Church of Christ and the Kingdom, but they will not succeed, there is nothing to fear from them, it is necessary immediately to put an end to the successes of the secret and open enemies in the capital itself.'

"The Emperor 'repeatedly kissed the hand that blessed him' and, when Photius was leaving, 'the Tsar fell to his knees before God and, turning to face Photius, said: 'Father, lay your hands on my head and say the Lord's prayer over me, and forgive and absolve me'. (Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 280-282)

[613] Elagin, op. cit., p. 243.

"On April 29 Photius gave his Majesty another note: 'To your question how to stop the revolution, we are praying to the Lord God, and look what has been revealed. Only act immediately. The way of destroying the whole plan quietly and successfully is as follows: 1) to abolish the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs and remove two others from a well-known person; 2) to abolish the Bible Society under the pretext that there are already many printed Bibles, and they are now not needed; 3) the Synod is, as before, to supervise education, to see if there is anything against the authorities and the faith anywhere; 4) to remove Koshelev, exile Gosner, exile Fessler and exile the Methodists, albeit the leading ones. The Providence of God is now to do nothing more openly.'

"This flaming defence of Orthodoxy [by Photius] together with Metropolitan Seraphim was crowned with success: on May 15, 1824 the Ministry of Spiritual Affairs was abolished."[614]

The Synod was now freer; it had a new over-procurator in the place of Golitsyn, and was purged of those members that had been linked with him. The Tsar had paid heed to Photius' appeal, and so had become a spiritual as well as a physical conqueror. "God conquered the visible Napoleon who invaded Russia," he said to him. "May He conquer the spiritual Napoleon through you!"

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[614] Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 282-283.

44. THE RUSSIAN BIBLE PROJECT

However, not everyone saw only good in the struggle against the Bible Society and the false mystics. Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, who had been Archimandrite Photius' early sponsor, declined to enter into open warfare with them, partly because of his personal friendship with Golitsyn (which did not prevent him from firmly refusing Golitsyn's request to distribute a work published by the Tatarinova group), and partly because he had another approach to the mystical ferment in Russia.

For "under the cover of the mystical temptations," writes Florovsky, "Philaret was able to recognize a living religious need, a thirst for religious instruction and enlightenment. He recognized the need in Russian society for the living enchurchment of the whole of life, whatever distorted and corrupt forms it sometimes assumed. And he considered that what was necessary was not rebuke, but pastoral admonishment, penetrated by the spirit of love and completed by positive teaching."[615]

As for Golitsyn, writes Metropolitan John Snychev, "the Muscovite archpastor saw in him much that was positive and recognized him to be one of the zealots of the spiritual side of the ecclesiastical organism. One way or the other, with the support of Prince Golitsyn it had been possible to publish many useful ecclesiastical books of a mystical character, but in an Orthodox spirit. Of course, Philaret was Orthodox in his views on mysticism. He clearly understood that in mysticism the most important question is its relation to the Church and the institutions of the Church. Every form of isolation could bring only harm, not good. Philaret recognized the usefulness of mystical teaching in the spirit of Orthodoxy and was far from sympathizing with a superficial approach to the latter. In the actions of the opponents of mysticism he found excesses, while the very method of the struggle against the latter he considered to be open to criticism and of little use. What, for example, did the party of Arakcheev and Photius gain by their victory? Absolutely nothing.… First of all, mystical literature was subjected to terrible attacks, and that which was formerly considered useful was now recognized to be harmful, demonic and heretical. All books of a mystical character were ordered to be removed from the libraries of educational institutions and a veto placed on them. Terrible difficulties were placed in the way of the publication of patristic literature. Publishers were frightened, as it were, to publish, for example, the writings of St. Macarius, they were frightened to appear thereby to be supporters of mysticism. The opponents of the Bible Society did great harm also to the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Russian…"[616]

Philaret (who was an outstanding Biblical scholar) had been taking an active part in this translation because he saw in it the best means of diverting the often misdirected religious aspirations of Russian society in the direction of Orthodoxy. "'Let the bread not be taken away from the child'... - Metropolitan Philaret firmly believed in the renovatory power of the Word of God. He uninterruptedly bound his destiny with the work on the Bible, with the translation of the Holy Scriptures. And it is difficult properly to value his Biblical exploit. For him personally it was bound up with great trials and sorrow."[617]

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[615] Florovsky, "Filaret, mitropolit moskovskij", op. cit., p. 271.
[616] Snychev, op. cit., pp. 160-161.

To the argument that the Bible should only be read with a patristic interpretation, Philaret replied: "Everything that is necessary for salvation is expounded in the Holy Scriptures with a clarity that any reader moved by the sincere wish to be enlightened can understand it. Certainly, trained interpreters of the Scriptures are useful for less educated Christians. But to state as a principle that an authoritative interpreter is required to bring out the propositions of the faith, demeans the dignity of God's word, and subjects the faith to human exposition."[618]

Philaret's project of translating the Bible into Russian was vigorously opposed by Metropolitan Seraphim, Archimandrite Photius and Admiral Shishkov, the new minister of education. Thus Shishkov "denied the very existence of the Russian language – 'as if he saw in it only baseness and meanness', 'the simple people's' dialect of the single Slavic-Russian language. He saw in [Philaret's] determination to translate the Word of God an ill-intentioned undertaking, 'a weapon of revolutionary plots', 'how can one dare to change the words which are venerated as having come from the mouth of God?'... And translate it into what? Who would read these translations, would they not pile up everywhere in torn-up copies?... From the translation of the Bible Shishkov turned to the *Catechism* of Philaret and to his *Notes on the Book of Genesis*, where the Biblical and New Testament texts were translated in a Russian 'reworking'. He was particularly disturbed by the fact that the *Catechism* was printed in a large print-run (18,000!) – he saw in this the clear manifestation of some criminal intention. Archimandrite Photius, on his part,... reproached the 'unhealthy and harmful' work of the Biblical translation – 'the power of the translation was such that it clearly overthrew the dogmas of Church teaching or cast doubt on the truth of the Church's teaching and traditions'. And Photius directly attacked Philaret, who, in his words, 'was struggling on behalf of a God-fighting assembly' and was supposedly 'influencing the translation of the Bible in order rather to give a new appearance to the Word of God, thereby assisting faithlessness, innovation and all kinds of ecclesiastical temptations'. He directly called Philaret's *Catechism* 'gutter water'. As Philaret was told by his disciple Gregory, who was then rector of the Petersburg Academy and many years later Metropolitan of Novgorod and Petersburg, they were saying about the Bible Society that 'it was founded in order to introduce a reformation'. They feared the translation of the Old Testament, and in particular the five books of Moses, lest it somehow seduced people to return to the Old Testament ritual law, or fall into Molokanism and Judaism (this thought was Magnitsky's). They began 'to say unpleasant things' about Philaret in Petersburg, and it was suggested that he be removed to the Caucasus as exarch of Georgia… In these years Philaret was in Moscow and took no notice of the Petersburg rumours and 'Alexandrine politics'. As before, he directly and openly defended the work on the Bible and attempted to show that 'the very desire to read the Holy Scriptures is already an earnest of moral improvement'. To the question, what was the purpose of this new undertaking in a subject so ancient and not subject to change as Christianity and the Bible, Philaret replied: 'What is the purpose of this new undertaking? But what is new here? Dogmas? Rules of life? But the Bible Society preaches none of these things, and gives into the hands of those who desire it the book from which the Orthodox dogmas and pure rules of life were always drawn by the true Church in the past and to the present day. A new society? But it introduces no novelty into Christianity, and produces not the slightest change in the Church'… They asked: 'Why is this undertaking of foreign origin?' But, replied Philaret, so much with us 'is not only of foreign origin, but also completely foreign'…

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[617] Florovsky, "Philaret, mitropolit Moskovskij", op. cit., p. 272.
[618] Philaret, in Hosking, op. cit., pp. 233-234.

"The supposed zealots succeeded in obtaining the banning of Philaret's *Catechism* on the excuse that there were 'prayers' in it – the Symbol of faith and the Commandments – in Russian. The Russian translation of the New Testament was not banned, but the translation of the Bible was stopped. And as Metropolitan Philaret of Kiev remembered later 'with great sorrow and horror', from fear of conversions to Judaism, 'they found it necessary to commit to the flames of brick factories several thousand copies of the five books of the Prophet Moses translated into Russian in the St. Petersburg Theological Academy and printed by the Bible Society'. M. Philaret reacted sharply and sorrowfully to these actions, which were carried out bypassing the Holy Synod. [He wrote to Metropolitan Seraphim]: 'I cannot understand by whom and how and why doubt can be cast on a work as pure and approved by all, as sacred as anything on earth. It would be no small matter if the doubt threatened only the one man who was the instrument of this work; but does it not threaten the Hierarchy? Does it not threaten the Church? If the Orthodoxy of a *Catechism* that was triumphantly approved by the Most Holy Synod is in doubt, then will not the Orthodoxy of the Most Holy Synod itself not be in doubt? Will not allowing this shake the Hierarchy to its foundations, will it not disturb the peace of the Church? Will it not produce a serious temptation for the Church?' Metropolitan Seraphim calmed Philaret, saying that Orthodoxy was not in question here, that everything came down to the language, but he refused 'to reply in a satisfactory manner' 'why the Russian language must have no place in the *Catechism*, which was, moreover, short, and intended for small children who had no knowledge whatsoever of the Slavonic language, and for that reason were not able to understand the truths of the faith which were expounded to them in that language'… The ban on the *Catechism* (1828) was removed only when all the texts had been put into Slavonic and the Russian translation of the Symbol, the Lord's Prayer and the Commandments had been left out. M. Philaret was deeply shaken by these events. 'Smoke is eating into their eyes', he wrote to his vicar, 'and they are saying: how corrosive is the light of the sun! They can hardly breathe from the smoke and with difficulty decree: how harmful is the water from the source of life! Blessed is he who can not only raise his eyes to the mountains, but run there for the clean air, the living water!… Blessed is he who can sit in his corner and weep for his sins and pray for the Sovereign and the Church, and has no need to take part in public affairs, becoming tainted with the sins of others and multiplying his own sins!' Above all Philaret was alarmed by the un-thought-through hastiness and interference of secular people, 'people who have been called neither by God, nor by their superiors', and who rise up in bold self-opinionated fashion against the appointed teachers."[619]

The destruction of volumes of the Holy Scriptures simply because they were in a Russian translation, and of the official *Catechism* because it quoted them in Russian rather than Slavonic, would, in another age, have led to a schism. But Philaret refrained from open protest precisely because he did not want to create a schism.[620]

However, with heresy overwhelming so many from the left, and blind prejudice parading as traditionalism from the right, the Russian Church was in a precarious position…

The Russian Bible Society was forced to close down in 1826 by Tsar Nicholas I; its property, worth some two million roubles, was transferred to the Holy Synod. The Society re-established itself in Russia in 1990. The project for the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Russian was resumed in 1859 in the reign of Alexander II.

"The Gospels appeared in 1861, the New Testament in 1861, and the whole Bible in 1876. It immediately proved immensely popular, and new editions had to be printed forthwith. In St. Petersburg a Society for the Dissemination of the Holy Scriptures sold or distributed nearly 1.25 million copies between 1861 and 1865.

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[619] Florovsky, "Philaret, mitropolit Moskovskij", pp. 273-275. And yet his main enemies, sadly, were the zealots of Church piety. Thus Fr. Photius, on reading Philaret's letter to Seraphim, wrote: "From the letters of Philaret it is not evident that he valued the faith, the Church and Orthodoxy, but only his own personality and honour" (in A.I. Yakovlev, "Sviatitel' Filaret (Drozdov) in gosudarstvennaia zhizn' Rossii v 1821-1831 godakh" (The Hierarch Philaret (Drozdov) and State life in Russia from 1821 to 1831), in Vladimir Tsurikov (ed.), *Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow 1782-1867*, Jordanville: Variable Press, 2003, p. 138.

[620] Metropolitan Seraphim of St. Petersburg had threatened to retire if Philaret insisted on continuing his translation. (Snychev, op. cit., p. 181)

"Ironically, the final appearance of the Bible in Russian took place just *after* the publication of Marx's *Das Kapital* in the same language. One might regard the succeeding century as a competition between the two doctrines for the allegiance of Russian working people…"[621]

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[621] Hosking, op. cit., p. 234.

45. THE GREEK REVOLUTION (1)

Greek nationalism under the Turkish yoke was nourished and sustained from two quite different sources. One was the Orthodox faith. Greek language and culture were encouraged by the Orthodox Church because the Gospel and most of the patristic writings were written in Greek, and a good knowledge of Orthodoxy required a good knowledge of Greek and Byzantine history. Orthodox Christian Hellenism, or Romanity (Ρωμειοσυνη), excluded the pagan Hellenism that glorified pagan Greek culture, placing it on a par with the Holy Fathers. Orthodox Greek nationalism wanted to liberate Greece for the sake of the faith; as such, it was to be found especially among the monks of Mount Athos. Throughout the period of the Ottoman yoke this true and Orthodox nationalism gave birth to saints and martyrs; the names of 162 martyrs for the faith at the hands of the Turks between 1453 and 1838 are known.[622]

Another, impure source of Greek nationalism was the western teaching on freedom promulgated by the French revolution, and brought back to Greece by the sons of the wealthy Phanariot families of Constantinople. As Mark Mazower writes, "it was the French Revolution which first suggested that emancipation might come through the action of the masses themselves [as opposed to a foreign king]. The toppling of the French monarchy, the rise of Bonaparte and above all, his invasion of Ottoman Egypt in 1798, radicalized the political thought of Balkan Christian intellectuals."[623]

The best of the Greeks rejected and exposed the propaganda of the French revolution even while so many of their fellow-countrymen succumbed to it. Thus St. Athanasius of Paros wrote: "The real reason the French were led into impiety is something else. However, because they have shown and continue to show such a fierce obsession with the establishment of secular freedom and equality, the impression is that for this reason alone, by a common decision and choice, they have almost completely eliminated Christ and Christianity and its holy books.

"Freedom, then, is found in two forms. One is the freedom of the soul and the other of the body. Examining the definition of freedom in both of these forms, we find that it is defined as complete autonomy, that is, that no one recognizes any kind of dependence above themselves, nor do they receive orders from another, but that they are the sole master and ruler of themselves and no one else in the world. So if this is defined as an essential feature of freedom, that is, that man is not subject to any principle, I completely reject this general axiom of the most foolish atheists. In other words, I do not accept that people are born free (independent) in the world. On the contrary, I support and will prove that there is no such freedom in the world: people are born and live in the world as ‘slaves’ (dependent) in many ways.

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[622] Norman Russell, "Neomartyrs of the Greek Calendar", *Sobornost'*, vol. 5, no. 1, p. 39.
[623] Mazower, *The Balkans,* London: Phoenix, 2000, p. 81.

“People are ‘slaves’ of God, just like the rest of creation. That people are "slaves" is so true, that when they are ignorant of their Creator and do not carry out His commandments, they are punished even for eternity. In fact, this punishment does not apply to any other tangible creature, because only people are distinguished from all the rest, since they have reason and have been adorned with the gift of autonomy, so they voluntarily become wicked and worthless servants and disobedient to the orders of their Master.

“Therefore, those who proclaim with words and decide in accordance with the law that people are born free are ignorant and foolish. Those who think this way are among the herd of Epicurus' followers. They are atheists and believe that the soul is mortal. They are apostates of the Divine revelations, rebels against the greatness of God Himself, deserving of hatred and despising by all creation, as enemies of God, the Creator and Lord of all. So here we have a way of ‘slavery’ (dependence) that is necessary and inevitable, as long as it is impossible for the creature to deny its Creator, the formed its Fashioner, the caused its Cause. After all, who is so ignorant that they do not know that the constituent parts of man are two, that is, the body and the soul? And that the rational soul is the one that governs the body, that is, the irrational part, and causes it to move wherever and however it wants? So is there anyone who doesn't know and doesn't accept this truth, which is known even to the Gentiles? A slight observation is enough for everyone to locate it in their consciousness.

“The word ‘freedom,’ according to the Greek interpretation, is etymologized by ελεύθειν ένθα ερά. That is, to go somewhere you like, wherever you want. And if one is deprived of this opportunity, if one is prevented from behaving in this way, he is called a slave.

“When we encounter another kind of ‘slavery’, dependence on the body, which is completely natural and necessary, how can various vain people say and write that people are born free? After all, isn't each of us born under parental authority? Don't parents naturally have the absolute power over us to treat us the way they want us to live when we don't live right or obey their promptings? Don't they punish us? Do they not renounce us and deprive us of our paternal inheritance?

"But isn't every head of household a kind of monarch at home? Doesn't he have different people at his workplace and he tells one 'come' and they come, and to the other 'do this' and they do it? And what happens to every apprentice and students of every specialIty? Aren't they subject to the authority of their teachers, as if they were masters? Who can deny that they obey with respect and definitely carry out the orders and are severely punished when they do not obey the rules of apprenticeship accurately?

"When we see people subjected in so many ways and maybe even more, where is their natural freedom? Even if we consider that they can be freed from parental and doctrinal dependencies, how can we ignore the dominance of the innate soul and that of the First and Supreme Cause, that is, the Creator and God of all?

"To the extent that it is impossible for the Creator and Maker not to be the Lord and Master of men, and to the extent that it is impossible for the soul, as a rational and intangible nature, not to be the hegemonic part of human composition, it is to the same degree that it is impossible for people to be free, independent.

"From a political point of view, the most appropriate government for governing states is the monarchical, imitating, after all, God, the King of all. This is because monarchical power is the best and most correct form of government, when the Monarch is not a tyrant, but submits to existing laws and is surrounded by wise and honest counselors, since pansophy and infallibility are qualities of God alone.

"I, in this work, am concerned with what contributes to my purpose, which is, as I said at the beginning, the benefit of my simpler brothers. As for which government is best suited for governing a state, let moral philosophers and political scientists investigate.

"After we have proved that people are neither born nor are free, it is time to look at this much-praised and legendary freedom, which has shaken and continues to shake everything. Examining it in the light of truth, we come to the conclusion that it is false in every way and not even worthy of the name 'freedom'. Judge if I'm wrong.

"He who is a slave only physically, and if he is chained and if he is beaten and if he suffers in many ways, not only is he not inflicted with any accusation from any prudent man, but on the contrary he wins compassion and mercy, since he is a fellow human being who has been out of luck. On the contrary, those who have unwittingly succumbed to the passions of the flesh are not only criticized and hated as mean and immoral, but also punished by the laws of the state as villainous and destroyers of public order and good behavior, and if by chance they escape here the life of punishment they deserve, after death it is impossible to avoid the indisputable decision of Divine Judgment.

"At this point I find it very difficult to find words to describe slavery rather than freedom, on the yoke of which the pseudo-liberals voluntarily submitted themselves. What can I say, what can I list to describe in all its extent their miserable condition? For two hours with the clock they shouted 'liberty! liberty!' when they beheaded their king at the guillotine. Freedom! Where is it located, where does it appear, where is this legendary and hidden in the sky liberty - freedom? In bodies only.

"Only the bodies of the French are free, that is, unruly, ungovernable, not subject to any human power. In other words, the molded, shaped and beautifully decorated clay, which is subject to decay and decomposition, the meal of worms, the source of stench! What is perceived today by the senses, dances and chatters and tomorrow withers, dissolves, does not count for anything! That alone is the great thing that caused all this rage, for which there has been and is so much excitement, rivers of blood have been shed, tens of thousands of people have been killed, not enemies, but compatriots and mutual friends!

"And, although sin is a common defect of human nature and there is no man who has not sinned, but they as a whole want to shake off all political and spiritual power, in order to be free and unhindered to commit every evil and impermissible thing: they become arrogant, shameless, audacious, malicious, murderous, predatory, cunning, arrogant, proud, fornicators, adulterers, bloodthirsty, to such an extent that I cannot describe how sly, filthy and unclean these Illuminati pigs are. And of course, it is true that the Franks have always been like that, but now their libertarianism has come to an end, sealed them, cut them off from other people, and guided them like irrational animals, whose lives they imitated with their works.

"And, if that wise opinion is true (and must be true) that says 'it is more burdensome to be enslaved to one's passions than to external tyrants,' they are absolutely slaves to the passions, and this slavery is much more burdensome, worse and poorer than enslavement to tyrannical people. Because the body is by nature subject to the commands of the dominant soul, and for this reason it is not paradoxical to submit to some external power and perform bodily services and works. However, it is completely unheard of and paradoxical for the dominant soul to fall from its high order, the utterly free one, and to submit with its own will to the irrational and filthy passions of the body.

"And who are those who have fallen into this wicked, filthy and vicious slavery? The Illuminati! That is, the enlightened. From where were they enlightened? From philosophy, as they themselves boast. And of course, no other country and no other nation has been fortunate enough to be as rich in academic schools and in every kind of science as the Kingdom of France. And yet, 'Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools' (Romans 1:22), according to the Holy Apostle.

"But with their declarations of freedom, they also link the declaration of Equality. And high on their flags they write 'Freedom-Equality'. And the reckless and relentless mob, what else more attractive, appealing and motivating for uprisings against superiors would they expect to hear beyond these declarations? With the proclamation of Freedom, he imagines himself free from all external human power, which he indiscriminately calls tyranny, even if it is not. With Equality statements, the water carrier and the one who cleans the feces, imagines himself as the most noble and prominent.

"Stupid and vain people! If, as Gregory the Theologian says, the monkey imagines he is a lion, what good will such an imagination do him? Equal! Tell me, where is this equality? He lives in fancy palaces and towering towers, and you, unfortunate one, have a poor hut, enough to house your sick and tired body. He is resting in a golden and ivory bed and on soft mattresses, and by force you have a wooden mat, to lay down your tormented body. There is not much space left on his table due to the abundance of food and wine, and you just have some bread and some poor quality cheese to fool your hunger!

"But why expand on the matter? How can two people be called equal when one is very rich and the other is starving and forced to steal because of his poverty? These declarations are an invention of cunning and insidious people, who, wanting to satisfy their passions and fulfill their evil desires, instilled in the minds of the common people this unbridled wind of equality, to help them achieve their purpose. Can there ever be equality in societies dominated by greed, dominated by passions, where no other expression is heard more often than ‘mine’ and ‘yours’?

“Equality, yes, did exist once! But where? In the newly formed Church of those good Christians, the simple and pious! There, as Saint Luke describes it (Acts 4:32), no one had anything of their own, but it was all common - money, clothes and food. But why was everything common? Because, he says, the hearts and souls of the faithful were one! Everyone had an opinion and a will about God and they were all connected with brotherly love, so close that, although they were a lot of people and of different ages, men and women, old and young, they were all so unified that they looked like one body that was moved by one soul.

“The same equality and solidarity has existed for many centuries in the coenobiums of the Venerable ones of old, Pachomios, Savvas, Euthymios, Theodosios and many others, because in them brotherly love and solidarity were preserved. That, indeed, was true Equality!

“But the equality the new democrats are showing is false, it is naked, as is their freedom. They have been invented by cunning people to carry out their plans with the power of the people. And of course, this double declaration of freedom and equality, as a whole, gained great prestige among the anonymous crowd, not only within the borders of France, but also in the campaigns against Italy, where, although they were campaigning for a war against the armies of its cities, they were welcomed everywhere with open arms, not as enemies, but as friends and brothers and saviors. At some point, however, they realized the fraud, perhaps because they saw that in many other places where the preachers of equality were trampled, ‘grass did not sprout again,’ as it is commonly said.

“And more than anywhere else, this fraud of the preachers of equality was to be understood by Venice, which unexpectedly became poor, unhappy, and afflicted. Venice, the once glorious city, famous all over the world for the noble origin of its inhabitants, for the cultivation of the arts, for its great and special wisdom and prudence. Venice, the city that for many centuries ruled many cities, now, unchallenged, with only the declarations of freedom and equality, the one that boasted that it would never be enslaved, became, alas, enslaved and, as it seems, fulfilled in it was Isaiah's prophecy, and it was abandoned as a tent in the vineyard, and as a fruit tree in the vineyard.

“Oh the paradoxical pitfalls of God's supreme providence! Perhaps it was this cup of Divine Judgment that the Most Peaceful had to drink, because of the tyranny imposed on us, treating us with great hostility.

"But for the consequences of external hardships as well as internal annihilation, the total destruction and the merits of many tearful calamities, caused and continue to be incessantly caused by the excitement of pseudo-freedom, a separate historical pain would be needed. At the moment, we have not promised such a thing, nor can we fulfill it satisfactorily. Suffice it to say, among other things, that the Libertines are in vain proclaiming freedom, at a time when they themselves are such tyrants: and if perhaps they were once martyred by one or a few, now, on the contrary, they are all tyrants and kill, exile or impose another penalty on those who are not convinced of their will. That is why many of their so-called priests and bishops and abbots fell victim to the terrible guillotine, not for a crime or an injustice, but because they wanted to preserve the freedom of their conscience and not sign against 'the anointed of the Lord,' that is, against their king. And of course, if all of them did not die in the communion of papal doctrines, they would certainly all be martyrs.

"So freedom is false, it is false and destructive, as well as equality: even the most intelligent people should not be seduced by such false declarations."[624]

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Unfortunately, however, the Orthodox thinking of St. Athanasius was rejected by many of his compatriots. "According to my judgement," wrote Theodore Kolokotronis in his *Memoirs,* "the French Revolution and the doings of Napoleon opened the eyes of the world. The nations knew nothing before, and the people thought that kings were gods upon the earth and that they were bound to say that whatever they did was well done. Through this present change it is more difficult to rule the people."[625]

Another aspect of westernism that entered Greece at this time was Freemasonry. In 1815 Archbishop of Cyprus anathematized it as follows: "Wherefore, clad in the sacred vestments of epitrachelion and omophorion, we say, If any man preach unto you any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, even though an angel from heaven, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1,8,9) As many as are befitting, that pursue after such a diabolic and lawless employment of Freemasonry, and all they that follow unto their infatuation and unto their error, let them be excommunicated and accursed by the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. After death, they shall be unpardoned, indissoluble, and bloated. Groaning and trembling, as Cain, shall they be upon the earth. (Genesis 4:14). The earth shall cleave and swallow them up, as Dathan and Abiram (Numbers 16, 31-32). The wrath of God shall be upon their heads, and their portion together with Judas the betrayer. An angel of the Lord will prosecute them with a flaming sword and, unto their life's termination, they will not know of progress. Let their works and toil be unblessed and let them become a cloud of dust, as of a summer threshing-floor. And all they indeed that shall abide still unto their wickedness will have such a recompense. But as many as shall go out from the midst of them and shall be separated, and having spat out their abominable heresy, and shall go afar off from their accursed infatuation, such kind shall receive the wages of the zealot Phineas; rather let them be blessed and forgiven by the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Only unconfused and undivided Trinity, the One God in nature, and by us His servants."[626]

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[624] St Athanasius of Paros, "Human Beings Are Neither Born Free Nor Equal", *A Christian Apology*, https://www.johnsanidopoulos.com/.../human-beings-are...

[625] Kolokotronis, in Mazower, op. cit., p. 87.

By the end of the eighteenth century most educated Greeks were deeply tainted by westernism. And there were other, political and economic factors exciting the dreams of the Phanariots: the conquest of the Ionian islands by Napoleon and then by the British; the rebellion of the Mohammedan warlord Ali Pasha against the Sultan in 1820; the inexorable gradual southward expansion of the Russian Empire, which drew Greek minds to the prophecies about the liberation of Constantinople by "the yellow-haired race", the Russians; and the restrictions on the accumulation of capital in the Ottoman empire, which contrasted unfavourably with the more business-friendly regimes they had encountered in the West. However, the most important influences were undoubtedly ideological – the influence of western ideas made available by the explosion in the provision of educational opportunities for young Greeks that the Phanariots created in the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth.

Such an emphasis on education had been made by New Hieromartyr Cosmas of Aitolia (+1779), who built over two hundred schools. But he emphasized, not education in western culture, but the opposite: education in Orthodoxy in order to escape the snares of western culture.[627] The merchants, however, sent young Greeks to the heterodox universities of Western Europe, especially Germany.

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[626] https://www.orthodox.net/…/declaration-of-cyprianus-against…

[627] "It is better," he said, "my brother, for you to have a Greek school in your village rather than fountains and rivers, for when your child becomes educated, then he becomes a human being. The school opens churches; the school opens monasteries." And to the people of Parga he said: "Take care to establish without fail a Greek school in which your children will learn all that you are ignorant of [because] our faith wasn't established by ignorant saints, but by wise and educated saints who interpreted the Holy Scriptures accurately and who enlightened us sufficiently by inspired teachings" (Nomikos Michael Vaporis, *Witnesses for Christ: Orthodox Christian Neomartyrs of the Ottoman Period 1437-1860*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000, p. 202).

"Here," writes Richard Clogg, "they came into contact not only with the heady ideas of the Enlightenment, of the French Revolution and of romantic nationalism but they were made aware of the extraordinary hold which the language and civilization of ancient Greece had over the minds of their educated European contemporaries.[628]

"During the centuries of the *Tourkokratia* knowledge of the ancient Greek world had all but died out, but, under the stimulus of western classical scholarship, the budding intelligentsia developed an awareness that they were the heirs to an heritage that was universally revered throughout the civilized world. By the eve of the war in independence this *progonoplexia* (ancestor obsession) and *arkhaiolatreia* (worship of antiquity), to use the expressive Greek terms, had reached almost obsessive proportions. It was precisely during the first decade of the nineteenth century that nationalists, much to the consternation of the Church authorities, began to baptize their children with the names of (and to call their ships after) the worthies of ancient Greece rather than the Christian saints…."[629]

Such veneration of Greek antiquity could, unfortunately, be combined with contempt for the real strength and glory of Greece – the Orthodox Church.

A case in point was Adamantios Korais. Sir Steven Runciman writes: "He was born at Smyrna in 1748 and went as a young man to Paris, which he made his headquarters for the rest of his life. There he made contact with the French *Encyclopédistes* and their successors. From them he learnt a dislike for clericalism and for tradition. From reading Gibbon he came to believe that Christianity had ushered in a dark age for European civilization. His friend Karl Schlegel taught him to identify nationality with language. 'Language is the nation.' He wrote; 'for where one says *la langue de France* one means the French nation.' The Greeks of his time were therefore of the same race as the ancient Greeks. But to make the identification closer he sought to reform the language so that it would be nearer to the Classical form... For the Byzantine past of Greece and for the Orthodox Church he had no use at all. His writings were eagerly read by the young intellectuals at the Phanar and by men of education all over Greece."[630]

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[628] The Europeans were originally interested in the ancient monuments. Hence the removal of the Elgin marbles and the Venus of Milo to London and Paris respectively. However, attitudes were changed, as Zamoyski points out, "by Lord Byron's visit to Greece in 1809, whose fruits were the second canto of *Childe Harold,* published in 1809, *The Giaour* and *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), and *The Siege of Corinth* (1816). More interested in people than in stones, Byron concentrated on depicting the craggy nobility of the natives. He was also much affected by the notion of a once great people under alien oppression. The negative picture of the Turks and their culture – rococo Ottomania had given way to priggish neoclassical contempt – made the oppression all the crueller to the European imagination, in which the Turk combined lustfulness with barbarity. The educated European of 1800 was as disgusted by the idea of the 'terrible' Turk defiling Greece as his twelfth-century forebear had been at the idea of Saracens profaning the Holy Land. And just as the Holy Land called out to Christendom for vengeance and crusade, so the oppressed Greek land called out for liberation" (*Holy Madness,* p. 233).

[629] Clogg, *A Concise History of Greece,* Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 27-28.

And so, mixed with the righteous Greek nationalism "for faith and fatherland", was an unrighteous, fallen nationalism influenced by the ideas of the French revolution and ready at times to put the narrow interests of the Greek nation – or rather, of the nation's Phanariot elite - above those of the other oppressed Orthodox under the Turkish yoke.

Such was the nationalist bombast of, for example, Benjamin of Lesbos, who wrote: "Nature has set limits to the aspirations of other men, but not to those of the Greeks. The Greeks were not in the past and are not now subject to the laws of nature."[631]

This mixed character of the Greek revolution, symbolized by the use of three different flags[632], determined its mixed outcome, and the fact that, in the course of the nineteenth century, Orthodox Eastern Europe was liberated, not through a single, united Orthodox movement of liberation, but by separate nationalist movements – Greek, Bulgarian, Serb, Romanian – which ended up, in 1912-1913, fighting each other rather than the common enemy…

"One of the first to develop plans for a coordinated revolt," writes Clogg, "was Rigas Velestinlis, a Hellenized Vlach from Thessaly. After acquiring his early political experience in the service of the Phanariot *hospodars* of the Danubian principalities, he had been powerfully influenced by the French Revolution during a sojourn in Vienna in the 1790s. The political tracts, and in particular his *Declaration of the Rights of Man*, which he had printed in Vienna and with which he aspired to revolutionize the Balkans, are redolent of the French example. Potentially the most significant was the *New Political Constitution of the Inhabitants of Rumeli, Asia Minor, the Islands of the Aegean and the Principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia.* This envisaged the establishment of a revived Byzantine Empire but with the substitution of republican institutions on the French model for the autocracy of Byzantium. Although it was intended to embrace all the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, Greeks, whether by birth or by culture, were to predominate. Rigas' carefully articulated schemes were without result for he was betrayed (by a fellow Greek) in Trieste as he was about to leave the Hapsburg territory to preach the gospel of revolution in the Balkans. With a handful of fellow conspirators he was put to death by the Ottomans in Belgrade in May 1798."[633]

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[630] Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity,* Cambridge University Press, 1968, pp. 392-393.

[631] Benjamin, *Stoikheia tis Metaphysikis (The Elements of Metaphysics)*, 1820 (in Greek); quoted in Clogg, op. cit., p. 33.

[632] Alexander Pushkin, who was in nearby Kishinev at the time, wrote that the Greeks "published proclamations which quickly spread everywhere – in them it is said that the Phoenix of Greece will arise from its own ashes, that the hour of Turkey's downfall has come, and that a great power [Russia?] approves of the great-souled feat! The Greeks have begun to throng together in crowds under three banners; of these one is tricoloured [the revolutionary flag], on another streams a cross wreathed with laurels, with the text 'By this sign conquer' [the religious flag, derived from God's promise to St. Constantine], on a third is depicted the Phoenix arising from its ashes [the patriotic flag]" (in Mazower, op. cit., p. 91).

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[633] Clogg, op. cit., pp. 29, 31.

46. THE GREEK REVOLUTION (2)

The spiritual leader of the Greek people, and the *ethnarch* of all the Orthodox under Turkish rule, was the Ecumenical Patriarch. He had good cause to resent the Sultan's dominion. "The rights of the patriarch," writes Fr. Alexander Schmemann, "were gradually reduced to nothing; all that was left to him was the 'right' of being responsible for the Christians. In the course of seventy-three years in the eighteenth century, the patriarch was replaced forty-eight times! Some were deposed and reinstalled as many as five times; many were put to torture. The rebellions of the Janissaries were accompanied by terrible bloodshed. Churches were defiled, relics cut to pieces, and the Holy Gifts profaned. Christian pogroms became more and more frequent. In the nineteenth century Turkey was simply rotting away, but the 'sick man of Europe' was supported at all points by other nations in opposition to Russia."[634]

However, the Patriarch was bound by his oath of allegiance to the Sultan not to encourage protest against the Turks, a contract that went back to the original agreement between Mehmet II and Patriarch Gennadius Scholarius.(New Martyr Demetrios of Samarina (+1808) also urged the Greeks to obey the Ottoman laws.) He was therefore unable to bless or help any potential revolution, which inevitably led to misunderstandings and disillusionment. For, as Runciman writes, "the Greek in the provinces could not understand the subtle politics of the Patriarchate. He could not appreciate the delicacy that the Patriarch and his advisers had to show in their dealings with the Sublime Porte. He looked to his village priest or to the local abbot or the bishop to protect him against the Turkish governmental authorities, and he gave his support to anyone who would champion him against the government. In the great days of the Ottoman Empire, when the administration had been efficient and on the whole just, Greek nationalism could be kept underground. But by the eighteenth century the administrative machinery was beginning to run down. Provincial Turkish governors began to revolt against the Sultan and could usually count on the support of the local Greeks. A growing number of outlaws took to the mountains. In Slav districts they were known by the Turkish name of *haidouks*; in Greece they were called the Klephts. They lived by banditry, directed mainly against the Turkish landowners; but they were quite ready to rob Christian merchants or travellers of any nationality. They could count on the support of the local Christian villagers, to whom they were latter-day Robin Hoods; they could almost always find refuge from the Turkish police in some local monastery…"[635]

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[634] Schmemann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1977, p. 274.

[635] Runciman, *The Great Church in Captivity,* Cambridge University Press, 1968, p. 391.

However, neither the klephts nor the villagers who supported them nor the Phanariots who nursed ideas of revolution could count on support from the Patriarchate.

Runciman writes: "A test came early in the nineteenth century when Sultan Selim made a serious effort to suppress brigandage. The Klephts in Greece, thanks to the spirit of revolt and to the hymns of Rhigas, had become popular heroes. It was a patriotic duty for a Greek to give them shelter against the police; and the village priest and the monks of the country monasteries were eager to help them. But they were a menace to orderly rule; and when the Sultan demanded of the Patriarch that he should issue a stern decree threatening with excommunication any priest or monk who would not aid the authorities in their suppression, the Patriarch could not well refuse. The decree was published in the Peloponnese; and though most of the higher clergy sullenly obeyed it, the villages and the poorer monasteries were outraged; and even at the Phanar there was open disapproval. It became clear that when the moment for revolt arrived the Patriarch would not be at its head.

"In spite of the Patriarch the plots continued. At the end of the eighteenth century there were even several secret societies in existence, with names such as the *Athena*, which hoped to liberate Greece with French help and which counted Korais among its members, or the *Phoenix*, which pinned its hopes on Russia. In 1814 three Greek merchants at Odessa in Russia, Nicholas Skouphas, Emmanuel Xanthos and Athanasius Tsakalof, the first a member of the *Phoenix* and the latter two freemasons, founded a society which they called the *Hetaireia ton Philikon*, the Society of Friends. Thanks chiefly to the energy of Skouphas, who unfortunately died in 1817, it soon superseded all the previous societies and became the rallying point of the rebellion. Skouphas was determined to include in the society patriots of every description; and soon it had amongst its members Phanariots such as Prince Constantine Ypsilanti and his hot-headed sons, Alexander and Nicholas, all now living in exile in Russia, and members of the Mavrocordato and Caradja families, or high ecclesiastics such as Ignatius, Metropolitan of Arta and later of Wallachia, and Germanus, Metropolitan of Patras[636], intellectuals such as Anthimus Ghazis, and brigand leaders such as the armatolos George Olympios and Kolokotronis.[637] It was organized partly on Masonic lines and partly on what the founders believed to have been the early Christian organization. It had four grades.[638] The lowest was that of Blood-brothers, which was confined to illiterates. Next were the Recommended, who swore an oath to obey their superiors but were not permitted to know more than the general patriotic aims of the society and were kept in ignorance of the names of their superiors and were supposed not even to know of the existence of the Blood-brothers. Above them were the Priests, who could initiate Blood-brothers and Recommended and who, after solemn oaths, were allowed to know the detailed aims of the society. Above them again were the Pastors, who supervised the Pastors, who supervised the Priests and saw that they only initiated suitable candidates; a suitable Recommended could become a Pastor without passing through the grade of Priest. From the Pastors were chosen the supreme authorities of the society, the *Arche.* The names of the *Arche* were unknown except to each other, and their meetings were held in absolute secrecy. This was thought necessary not only security against external powers but also for the prestige of the society. Had the names of its directors been known, there might have been opposition to several of them, particularly among such a faction-loving people as the Greeks; whereas the mystery surrounding the *Arche* enabled hints to be dropped that it included such weighty figures as the Tsar himself. All grades had to swear unconditional obedience to the *Arche*, which itself operated through twelve Apostles, whose business it was to win recruits and to organize branches in different provinces and countries. They were appointed just before the death of Skouphas; and their names are known. It was first decided to fix the headquarters of the society on Mount Pelion, but later, after the initiation of the Maniot chieftain, Peter Mavromichalis, it was moved to the Mani, in the south-east of the Peloponnese, a district into which the Turks had never ventured to penetrate.

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[636] He came from the same village of Dhimitsana in the Peloponnese as Patriarch Gregory V. The attitudes of these two hierarchs came to symbolise a fundamental division in Greek society that was to continue for decades… (V.M.)

[637] Adam Zamoyski writes that the *Hetaira's* "ultimate aim was the liberation of Greece and the restoration of a Greek Empire. More immediately it was concerned with the 'purification' of the Greek nation…. By 1821 the *Hetairia* had a total of 911 members." (*Holy Madness*, p. 234) (V.M.)

"There were however two distinguished Greeks who refused to join the Society. One was the ex-Patriarch Gregory V. He had been deposed for the second time in 1808, and was living on Mount Athos, where the Apostle John Pharmakis visited him. Gregory pointed out that it was impossible for him to swear an oath of unconditional obedience to the unknown leaders of a secret society[639] and that anyhow he was bound by oath to respect the authority of the Sultan. The reigning Patriarch, Cyril VI, was not approached.

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[638] Although the *Philiki Hetairia* recalled Masonry in its four grades, in its oaths of secrecy and obedience to unknown leaders, and in the fact that two of its three founders were in fact Freemasons, it was nevertheless Orthodox in its ideology, according to Archimandrite Ambrose, (*Tektonismos kai Philiki Hetairia (*Masonry and the Society of Friends*)*, Athens, 1972 (in Greek)). But if two of the three founders of the Hetairia were Masons, then Masonic influence cannot be ruled out. (V.M.)

[639] Gregory Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece 1821-1852*, Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 24. Moreover, these "highest authorities" (*anotati arkhi*) were called "Great Priests of the Eleusinian Mysteries" (Clogg, op. cit., p. 35). It is understandable that the first priest in Orthodoxy could not be involved in such things! (V.M.)

"Still more disappointing for the revolutionaries was the refusal of the Tsar's foreign minister, John Capodistrias, to countenance the *Hetairia*.[640]

"John Antony, Count Capodistrias, had been born in Corfu in 1770, and as a young man had worked for the Ionian government there, before going to Russia at the time of the second French occupation of the Ionian islands in 1807. He was given a post in the Russian diplomatic service and was attached to the Russian Embassy at Vienna in 1811, and next year was one of the Russian delegates at the treaty negotiations at Bucharest. His remarkable abilities impressed Tsar Alexander, who in 1815 nominated him Secretary of State and Assistant Foreign Minister. In his youth Capodistrias had made contacts with many of the Greek revolutionary thinkers, and he was well known to be a Greek patriot. In the past many Greeks had looked to France to deliver them from the Turks; but after Napoleon's collapse the whole Greek world turned to Russia, and Capodistrias's accession to power gave them confidence. The Russian sovereign was the great patron of Orthodoxy. The Greeks forgot how little they had gained from Catherine the Great, the imperialistic German free-thinker, who had incited them to revolt in 1770 and then had abandoned them.[641] But at the Treaty of Kucuk Kainarci in 1774 Russia had acquired the right to intervene in Turkish internal affairs in the interests of the Orthodox. Catherine's son, … Paul, was clearly unwilling to help the Greek cause; but when Alexander I succeeded his murdered father in 1801 hopes rose. Alexander was known to have liberal views and mystical Orthodox sympathies. Belief in his aid had encouraged the Princes of Moldavia and Wallachia to plot against the Sultan in 1806; and, when they were deposed by the Sultan, the Tsar cited his rights under the Treaty of Kucuk Kainarci and declared war on Turkey. The only outcome of the war had been the annexation by Russia of the Moldavian province of Bessarabia. But the Greeks were not discouraged. Now, with a Greek as the Tsar's Secretary of State, the time had surely come for the War of Liberation. The plotters refused to realize that Capodistrias was the Tsar's servant and a practical man of the world; and they did not know that the Tsar himself was becoming more reactionary and less willing to countenance rebellion against established authority.

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[640] The *Hetairia* sent an envoy to Capodistrias in St. Petersburg. He was appalled, and advised them that if the conspirators "do not want to perish themselves and destroy together with themselves their innocent and unfortunate Race, they should abandon their revolutionary plots and live as before under the Governments they find themselves, until Providence decides otherwise." Again, when the revolution broke out, he said: "So, a premature revolution for Greece that is going to destroy all my efforts for a happy future" (Frazee, op. cit., p. 17). However, he did not betray the plan of the plotters, and when the revolution began he resigned his post as minister and went to Geneva, where he worked quietly to help the insurgents. (V.M.)

[641] "The ill-fated Orlov expedition to the Peloponessos, launched by Catherine the Great, and the combined Russian-Greek attempt to free the Peloponnesos from the tyranny of the Ottoman Mohammedans, ended in disaster. In addition to destroying the Greek military forces and many of the Russians, the Albanian Mohammedan mercenaries, who were called in by the Ottoman Mohammedans, wreaked havoc on the local population…" (Vaporis, op. cit., p. 337) (V.M.)

"The planners of Greek independence could not count on the open support of the Patriarchate. They should have realized that they also could not count on the support of Russia. And the nationalist ecclesiastical policy of the Church during the last century deprived them of the friendship of the other peoples of the Balkans. The leaders of the Hetairia were aware of this. They made earnest attempts to enrol Serbian, Bulgarian and Roumanian members. When Karageorge revolted against the Turks in Serbia Greek armatoles and klephts came to join him. Even the Phanariot princes had offered support; but they were rebuffed. 'The Greek Princes of the Phanar,' Karageorge wrote, 'can never make common cause with people who do not wish to be treated like animals.' Karageorge's revolt was put down by the Turks in 1813. Two years later the Serbs revolted again, under Miloš Obrenovic, a far subtler diplomat, who secured Austrian support and eventually induced the Sultan to accept him as a reliable vassal-prince. Miloš had no contact with the Greeks. The Hetairia therefore pinned its faith on Karageorge, who was persuaded to become a member in 1817. As Karageorge was greatly admired by the Bulgarians it was hoped that numbers of them would now join the movement. Karageorge was then sent back to Serbia. But the Serbs, who were satisfied with Miloš's achievements, offered him no support; and Miloš regarded him as a rival to be eliminated. He was assassinated in June 1817. With his death any hope of interesting the Serbs in the coming Greek rebellion faded out; and there was no one capable of rallying the Bulgars to the cause. Karageorge alone could have given the *Hetairia* the air of not being exclusively Greek.

"The *Hetairia* had higher hopes of the Roumanians. There a peasant leader, Tudor Vladimirescu, who had led a band to help the Serbs, was defying the Turkish police in the Carpathian mountains and had gathered together a considerable company. He was in close touch with two leading hetaerists, George Olympius and Phokianos Savvas, and he himself joined the society, promising to co-ordinate his movements with the Greeks'. But he was an unreliable ally; for he was bitterly opposed to the Phanariot princes, who, he considered, had brought ruin to his country…"[642]

"By the end of 1820," continues Runciman, "everything seemed to be ready. Ali Pasha of Janina was in open revolt against the Sultan; and had promised help to the Greeks; and though Osman Pasvanoglu was dead, his pashalik of Vidin was in disorder, tying up Turkish troops south of the Danube. The *Arche* of the *Hetairia* had a few months previously elected a Captain-General, choosing a young Phanariot Alexander Ypsilanti, son of the ex-Prince Constantine of Moldavia. It is interesting to note that the plotters considered that only a Phanariot had sufficient experience and prestige for the post. Alexander Ypsilanti was born in 1792 and spent his youth in Russia. He had won a reputation for gallantry and military skill when serving in the Russian army and had lost an arm at the battle of Kulm, fighting against the French. He was known to be an intimate friend of the Tsar and the Tsaritsa and of Capodistrias. He made it his first task to improve the efficiency of the Society and summoned the one and only plenary meeting of the *Arche*, which was held at Ismail in southern Russia in October 1820. The original plan had been to start the revolt in the Peloponnese, where there would be a secure base in the Mani and where the sympathy of the inhabitants was assured. Alexander now changed his mind. It would be better to start the main campaign in Moldavia. By the Treaty of Bucharest the Turks had undertaken not to send troops into the Principalities without Russian consent. Vladimirescu would distract what Turkish militia was there already; and a successful army sweeping through Wallachia and across the Danube was the only thing that might induce the Bulgarians and the Serbians to join in. Meanwhile a subsidiary rising in the Peloponnese, which Alexander's brother Demetrius was sent to organize, would further embarrass the Turks.

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[642] Runciman, op. cit., pp. 398-402. That the Romanians should have placed their hopes of freedom from the Turks on the tsar rather than on a phanariot was hardly surprising. Moldavia had been closely linked to Russia for many centuries, and in November, 1806, when the Russo-Turkish war began, Metropolitan Benjamin (Kostake) in his pastoral epistle wrote: "The true happiness of these lands lies in their union with Russia". And when Bessarabia, that is, the part of Moldavia east of the Prut, was united to Russia in 1812 (an annexation recognized by the Congress of Vienna in 1815), there was great rejoicing among the people, and in five years the population of Bessarabia almost doubled through an influx from the lands west of the Prut. (Vladimir Bukarsky, "Moskovskij Patriarkhat pod udarom: na ocheredi – Moldavia", *Pravoslavnaia Rus'*, N 23 (1836), December 1/14, 2007, p. 4).

"The invasion of Moldavia was timed to begin on 24 November (O.S.) 1820. Alexander had already gathered together a small army of Greeks and Christian Albanians on the Russian side of the frontier. Almost at the last moment Capodistrias counselled delay. The Austrian secret police had discovered the plans and had sent to warn the Sultan; and the Tsar was nervous of international reactions. But, in January 1821, Vladimirescu, encouraged by George Olympus, against the advice of Phokianos Savvas, began to attack Turkish police posts and was scornful of Ypsilanti's hesitation. About the same time the Prince of Wallachia, Alexander Soutzo, died, poisoned it was rumoured by the *Hetairia*, of which he was known to disapprove. Demetrius Ypsilanti reported from the Peloponnese that everyone there was impatient of further delays. Alexander Ypsilanti decided that the time had come to act. He sought an audience of the Tsar before leaving St. Petersburg, but it was refused.[643] The Tsaritsa, however, sent him

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[643] Michael Binyon writes that a letter from Alexander I, signed by Capodistrias, "denounced Yspilanti's actions as 'shameful and criminal', upbraided him for misusing the tsar's name, struck him from the Russian army list, and called him to lay down his arms immediately" (*Pushkin*, London: HarperCollins, 2002, p. 133). Ironically, the officer sent by the Russian government to report on the insurrection was Pestel, the future leader of the Decembrist rebellion (op. cit., p. 134). (V.M.)

Troubetskoy writes: "Under normal circumstances there would have been no doubt about the tsar's reaction: as champion of the Orthodox world, he could hardly have rejected such a plea. The circumstances at the time, however, were anything but normal. Central Europe was her blessing; and he was assured that the Tsar would personally protect his wife. On 22 February (O.S.) Alexander and his little band crossed over the Pruth into Moldavia.

"In his desire to prevent a leakage of news Alexander had not warned his fellow-plotters. When news of his advance reached the Peloponnese, his brother Demetrius hesitated, fearing that it might be a false rumour. But the people would not wait. They found a leader in Germanus, Metropolitan of Patras, who, in defiance of the Patriarchate and of Orthodox tradition, raised the standard of revolt at the monastery of Agia Lavra, near Kalavryta, on 25 March.[644] The Mani had already risen. The islands of Spetsai and Psara and a little later Hydra rose in early April. By the end of April all central and southern Greece was up in arms.

"But it was now too late for Alexander Ypsilanti. He had marched unopposed on Bucharest. But there was no news of any rising among the Bulgarians or the Serbs; and when he reached Bucharest he found that Tudor Vladimirescu and his troops were there before him; and they refused to let him into the city. 'I am not prepared to shed Roumanian blood for Greeks,' said Vladimirescu.[645] There were skirmishes between the two forces. Then came news that the Tsar had repudiated the whole rebellion at the Congress of Laibach, and with his permission a huge Turkish army was approaching the Danube, ready to invade the Principalities. Ypsilanti retired north-east, towards the Russian frontier. Vladimirescu, after lingering for a few days in Bucharest trying to make terms with the Turkish commander, moved back on 15 May into the Carpathians. But he had lost control over his own followers. They allowed George Olympus to take him prisoner and to put him to death, on the evening of 26 May, for his treason to the cause. Phokianos Savvas and a garrison of Albanians held Bucharest for a week, then also retired into the mountains. The Turks entered Bucharest before the end of May, then moved in pursuit of Ypsilanti. On 7 June (O.S.) they routed his army at a battle at Dragasani. His best troops perished. He himself fled over the Austrian border into Bukovina, where by Metternich's orders he was arrested. He spent the remainder of his life in an Austrian prison. The remnant of his army was rallied by George Cantacuzenus, who led them back towards the Russian

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captive to the views of Austrian chancellor Metternich, to whom any hint of insidious liberalism – revolutionary movements in particular – was anathema. The Holy Alliance, of which Russia was an enthusiastic signatory and driving force, was to assure this. Despite his personal sympathy for the Greeks and antipathy to the Turks, there was no way the tsar could let down the established new order. It was a conundrum that he painfully resolved by disavowing and censuring Ypsilantis." (*Imperial Legend*, Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2003, pp. 112-113) (V.M.)

[644] Germanus wrote to the ambassadors of the foreign powers: "We, the Greek race of Christians, seeing that the Ottoman people despises us and is intending destruction against us, sometimes in one way and at other times in another, have decided firmly: either we shall all die or we shall be liberated." (*Boanerges*, 24, March-April, 2006, p. 32 (in Greek)). Germanus was supported by eight other bishops, five of whom died in prison. (V.M.)

[645] Here we see the bitter fruits reaped by the Greek Phanariots' rule in Romania. (V.M.)

frontier. But the frontier was closed to them. The Turks caught up with them at Sculeni on the Pruth and massacred them there, on 17 June, in sight of Russian territory. Savvas surrendered to the Turks in August and was put to death by them. George Olympus held out till September in the monastery of Secu. When all hope was lost he fired his powder stores and blew up the monastery with himself and all his garrison within it."[646]

However, while the Phanariot rebellion in the north failed, the rebellion of the bishops and the people in the south, in the Peloponnese, succeeded. But the cost was high. A characteristic of the war was the extreme cruelty on both sides. It began with the Greeks. By April, 1821, 15,000 out of the 40,000 Turkish inhabitants of the Peloponnese had been killed. Within a few months, shouting "Kill all the Turks in the Morea", the Greeks had killed 20,000 men, women and children. At Tripolitsa, the Scottish Philhellene Thomas Gordon watched as the Greeks, "mad with vindictive rage, spared neither age nor sex – the streets and houses were inundated with blood, and obstructed with heaps of dead bodies. Some Mohammedans fought bravely and sold their lives dearly, but the majority were slaughtered without resistance..." The British observer George Finlay wrote: "Women and children were frequently tortured before they were murdered. After the Greeks had been in possession of the city for forty-eight hours, they deliberately collected together about two thousand persons of every age and sex, but principally women and children, and led them to a ravine in the nearest mountain [Mount Maenalion] where they murdered every soul."

"On 27 January 1822," writes Sir Richard Evans, "meeting at Epidauros in the Peloponnese, a self-styled Greek National Assembly issued a ringing declaration of independence from 'the cruel yoke of Ottoman power'. The Greeks, it proclaimed, were fighting 'a holy war, a war the object of which is to reconquer the rights of individual liberty, of property and honour – rights which the civilized peoples of Europe, our neighbours, enjoy today.' Yet despite the ideological proclamations of the Assembly, which provided the formal leadership of the rebel movement, the uprising remained uncoordinated, internally divided and chaotic, a huge gulf separating the educated professional elements from the rough-and-ready and often barely politically aware fighters on the ground... "[647]

The Turks responded in kind. Massacres began in Constantinople, where Patriarch Gregory V was in an impossible position. The Sultan was convinced that he supported the insurrection. So Gregory, writes Frazee, "called a meeting of the Greek leaders and people to discuss their common peril that same day after he had met with the sultan. Mahmud had demanded that the patriarch and Synod excommunicate those responsible for the uprising and those who had killed innocent Turks. At the patriarchate, therefore, the patriarch of Jerusalem, Polykarpos, four synodal archbishops, Karolos Kallimachi, Hospodar of Wallachia, the Dragoman of the Porte, Konstantinos Mourousi, and the Grand Logothete, Stephanos Mavroyeni, gathered to decided on their next step. A number of other Greeks were also in attendance 'of every class and condition'. Gregorios and Mourousi presided. The assembled Greeks were all exhorted 'to carefully guard against any move or action contrary to their allegiance and fidelity to their Sovereign'. A letter was drafted which incorporated the sultan's suggestion and was sent off to be printed at the patriarchal press. The patriarch then urged that the Greeks prepare to leave the city quickly, promising that he would stay: 'As for me, I believe that my end is approaching, but I must stay at my post to die, and if I remain, then the Turks will not be given a plausible pretext to massacre the Christians of the capital.'

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[646] Runciman, op. cit., pp. 403-405.
[647] Evans, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

"The letter of excommunication against the revolutionaries appeared on Palm Sunday, 4 April, in all the Greek churches of the capital signed by the patriarch, Polykarpos of Jerusalem, and twenty-one other prelates. In part, the document stated: 'Gratitude to our benefactors is the first of virtues and ingratitude is severely condemned by the Holy Scriptures and declared unpardonable by Jesus Christ; Judas the ungrateful traitor offers a terrible example of it; but it is most strongly evidenced by those who rise against their common protector and lawful sovereign, and against Christ, who has said that there is no rule or power but comes from God. It was against this principle that Michael Soutzos and Alexandros Ypsilantis, son of a fugitive, sinned with an audacity beyond example, and have sent emissaries to seduce others, and to conduct them to the abyss of perdition; many have been so tempted to join an unlawful *hetairia* and thought themselves bound by their oath to continue [as] members, but an oath to commit a sin was itself a sin, and not binding – like that of Herod, who, that he might not break a wicked obligation committed a great wickedness by the death of John the Baptist.' The text ended by solemnly condemning and excommunicating Soutzos and Ypsilantis, having been signed on the altar itself. The patriarchal letter was the final blow to strike Ypsilantis' fading expedition in the Principalities."[648]

Some have argued that the patriarch secretly repudiated this anathema; which is why the Turks, suspecting him of treachery, hanged him at Pascha. Gregory's biographer, Kandiloros writes: "As the representative of Christ it cannot be believed that the patriarch signed such a letter. But as the head of a threatened people, he had to take measures, as well as he could, to save his powerless and hard-pressed population from being massacred."[649] "In any case," writes Fr. Anthony Gavalas, "the anathema was ignored, as were all the other letters unfavourable to the plans of the revolutionaries, as having been issued under duress. There is an opinion that the patriarch knew that the anathema would be so considered and issued it, hoping to placate the Turks on the one hand, and on the other, to gain time for the revolution to gain strength."[650]

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[648] Frazee, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

[649] Kandiloros, in Frazee, op. cit. p. 29.

In the opinion of the present writer, while the patriarch was undoubtedly a patriot who longed for the freedom of his country, his righteousness of character precludes the possibility that he could have been plotting against a government to which he had sworn allegiance and for which he prayed in the Divine Liturgy, or that he could have been hypocritical in such an important church act. After all, as we have seen, he had always refused to join the *Philiki Hetairia.* In this connection it is significant that the patriarch's body was picked up by a Russian ship and taken to Odessa, mutely pointing to the place where the organization that had indirectly caused his death had been founded.

The patriarch was not the only one to die. "Two metropolitans and twelve bishops followed him to the gallows. Then it was the turn of the laymen. First the Grand Dragoman, Mouroussi, and his brother, then all the leading Phanariots. By the summer of 1821 the great houses in the Phanar were empty. A new Patriarch had been appointed… There was a new Dragoman, unrelated to any of the Phanariot clans; and he was executed on the merest suspicion of treason a few months later; and the post was abolished. The powers of the Patriarchate were severely curtailed. The contract between the Conquering Sultan and Gennadius had been broken by the Patriarchate. The Turks were no longer prepared to trust the Orthodox…"[651]

The Tsar, writes John Julius Norwich, "did not mince his words" when condemning the Turks. "In an ultimatum drafted by Capodistrias, he declared that: 'the Ottoman government has placed itself in a state of open hostility against the Christian world. It has legitimised the defence of the Greeks, who will henceforth be fighting solely to save themselves from inevitable destruction. In view of the nature of that struggle, Russia will find herself strictly obliged to offer them help, because they are persecuted; protection, because they need it; and assistance, jointly with the whole of Christendom, because she cannot surrender her brothers in religion to the mercy of blind fanaticism.' This was presented to the Turkish government on 18 July. On the 25th, having received no reply, the Russian ambassador, Count Stroganoff, broke off diplomatic relations with the Porte and closed the embassy…"[652]

Nevertheless, there was to be no military help from Tsar Alexander, who disapproved of revolution on principle.[653] Thus Capodistrias wrote: "The emperor has highly disapproved of these [means] which Prince Ipsilanti appears to wish to employ to deliver Greece. At a time when Europe is menaced everywhere by revolutionary explosions, how can one not recognize in that which has broken out in the two principalities [Wallachia and Moldavia] the identical effect of the same subversive principles, the same intrigues which attract the calamities of war… the most dreadful plague of demagogic despotism."[654]

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[650] Gavalas, "St. Gregory V, Patriarch of Constantinople", *Orthodox Life,* vol. 28, N 2, March-April, 1978, p. 22.

[651] Runciman, op. cit., p. 406.

[652] Norwich, *The Middle Sea,* London: Vintage, 2007, p. 469.

[653] America's President John Quincy Adams also refused to support the Greeks.

The main leader of the Greeks now was General Theodore Kolokotronis, whose greatest success was the defeat of the Ottoman army under Mahmud Dramali Pasha at the Battle of Dervenakia in 1822. In 1825, he was appointed commander-in-chief of the Greek forces in the Peloponnese. However, Runciman had good reason to call him a "brigand"; for he was cruel not only to the Turks, but also to those Greeks that did not obey him. Thus in his *Memoirs* he wrote: "'The people of Karytaina's plains have not taken arms.' Such was the writing which I received. I lost no time, but straightway issued the following proclamation: 'Fire and sword to every place that does not listen to the voice of the nation.'"[655]

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[654] Capodistrias, in Mazower, op. cit., pp. 91-92.
[655] Kolokotrones, *Memoirs: War of Greek Independence 1821-1833*, p. 133.

47. THE GREEKS AFTER THE REVOLUTION

The Greeks after the revolution were desperately poor and even more desperately divided. The new patriarch, Eugenius, again anathematized the insurgents. In response, twenty-eight bishops and almost a thousand priests in free Greece anathematized the patriarch, calling him a Judas and a wolf in sheep's clothing.[656] The Free Greeks now commemorated "all Orthodox bishops" at the Liturgy instead of the patriarch. Not surprisingly, in 1824 the patriarchate refused a request from the Greek Church for Holy Chrism.[657]

In 1822 the Free Greeks entered into negotiations with the Pope for help against the Turks. Very soon the Faith was being betrayed for the sake of the political struggle, as at the council of Florence. President Mavrokordatos wrote to the Papal Secretary of State: "The cries of a Christian nation threatened by complete extermination have the right to receive the compassion of the head of Christendom."[658] Greek delegates to the meeting of the Great Powers in Verona wrote to Pope Pius VII that the Greek revolution was not like the revolutions of other nations raised against altar and throne. Instead, it was being fought in the name of religion and "… asks to be placed under the protection of a Christian dynasty with wise and permanent laws". In another letter the delegates addressed the pope as "the common father of the faithful and head of the Christian religion", and said that the Greeks were worthy of the pope's "protection and apostolic blessing". Metropolitan Germanus was even empowered to speak concerning the possibility of a reunion of the Churches. However, it was the Pope who drew back at this point, pressurized by the other western States that considered the sultan to be a legitimate monarch.[659] How soon had a struggle fought "for faith and fatherland" betrayed the faith while only partially winning the fatherland! For real political independence had not been achieved. If the Turks had been driven out, then the British and the French and later the Germans came to take their place.

The Greeks had to pay a heavy price for their rebellion.[660] After the martyrdom of Patriarch Gregory, the Turks ran amok in Constantinople; and there were further pogroms in Thessaloniki, Smyrna, Adrianople, Crete and especially in Chios, where, in May, 1922, in response to the arrival of a small party of Greek revolutionaries from Samos, 30,000 Muslims invaded from Asia Minor, killed 25,000 Greeks and took 45,000 into slavery. Many others fled. The population of the island fell from 120,000 before 1822 to 30,000 a year later.[661]

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[656] Gregory Frazee, *The Orthodox Church and Independent Greece 1821-1852,* Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 44.

[657] Frazee, op. cit., p. 62.

[658] Frazee, op. cit., p. 54.

[659] Frazee, op. cit., pp. 54-57.

[660] Not for the first time. Thus in 1601 Metropolitan Dionysius rebelled twice against the Turks, which led, not only to his own death, but to the deaths of many innocent Christians, including Hieromartyr Metropolitan Seraphim of Phanarion, who had taken no part in the rebellion.

Aroused by these events, many young westerners, among whom was the famous poet Lord Byron, decided to join the Greek freedom-fighters. They sympathized with the sufferings of the Greeks, which were popularized by works of art such as Byron's poems and Eugene Delacroix's painting *The Massacre at Chios* (1824); but they were fighting, not so much for Orthodox Greece as for their romantic vision of ancient, pagan Greece, which they saw as having been the first to espouse the ideal of freedom.[662] Similarly, although many Greeks undoubtedly fought for the sake of Orthodoxy against Islam, several of their leaders espoused an essentially western ideology of freedom.[663]

A more peaceful, and ultimately more beneficial, contribution to the new Greek state was offered by Lord Frederick North, Earl of Guildford, a ounger son of the British Prime Minister that had surrendered British sovereignty over the North American colonies to Washington's rebels.

North visited the island of Corfu in 1792, and after being converted to Orthodoxy by a layman (he already knew the main points of Orthodox theology) he was received into the Church by baptism with the name Demetrios. Keeping his conversion secret from his compatriots, North returned to the island in 1820, spending the greater part of each year there until his death in 1827. "To the British and Greek public of the time, the fifth earl of Guilford was simply one among a number of British philhellenes. They knew him as the author of a Pindaric ode in Greek honouring the empress Catherine of Russia, as president of the 'Society of the Lovers of the Muses… founded at Athens in 1814, as an indefatigable collector of books and manuscripts. They knew him above all as an ever-generous patron of Greek letters, as benefactor to a host of Greek students in western universities, and as chancellor of the Ionian academy founded at Corfu in 1824, almost entirely through his efforts. This academy or university, as it could with some justice claim to be, served as a notable centre of education to the whole Greek nation during the years of the rising against the Turks and in the period immediately following, when the Greeks possessed as yet no other institute of higher learning…"[664]

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[661] Evans, op. cit., p. 56.

[662] However, there is a strong tradition in Greece that Byron was baptized into the Orthodox Church before he died.

[663] Ypsilantis' ideology had little to do with Orthodoxy. "'Let us recollect, brave and generous Greeks, the liberty of the classic land of Greece; the battles of Marathon and Thermopylae, let us combat upon the tombs of our ancestors who, to leave us free, fought and died,' Ypsilantis wrote in his declaration of 24 February 1821. 'The blood of our tyrants is dear to the shades of the Theban Epaminondas, and of the Athenian Thrasybulus who conquered and destroyed the thirty tyrants' – and so on." (Zamoyski, *Holy Madness*, p. 235).

London financiers were also involved in the Greek war effort. Their reasons, of course, had nothing to do with sympathy for the suffering or with an enthusiasm for Classical Greece. Nevertheless, their contribution was vital. As Yuval Noah Harari writes, "They proposed to the rebel leaders the issue of tradable Greek Rebellion Bonds on the London stock exchange. The Greeks would promise to repay the bonds, plus interest, if and when they won their independence. Private investors bought bonds to make a profit, or out of sympathy for the Greek cause, or both. The value of Greek Rebellion Bonds rose and fell on the London stock exchange in tempo with military successes and failures on the battlefields of Hellas. The Turks gradually gained the upper hand. With a rebel defeat imminent, the bondholders faced the prospect of losing their trousers. The bondholders' interest was the national interest, so the British organized an international fleet that, in 1827, sank the main Ottoman flotilla at the Battle of Navarino. After centuries of subjugation, Greece was finally free. But freedom came with a huge debt that the new country had no way of repaying. The Greek economy was mortgaged to British creditors for decades to come…"[665]

Before Navarino, however, the Greek cause had very nearly been lost. "The Ottomans," writes Evans, "dispatched a strong force of Egyptian troops supplied by the sultan's nominal vassal Muhammad Ali (1769-1849), who had agreed to put down the rebellion in return for the addition of Syria to his fiefdom. His troops soon began advancing up the Peloponnese, leaving a bloody trail behind them. Public pressure in western Europe mounted, but serious differences opened up between the Russians, who sought to exploit the weakness of the Ottomans for their own purposes, and the British, who distrusted Russian ambitions. Alexander I had initially shrunk from unilateral action since he knew this would undermine the Holy Alliance, which after all had largely been his own creation. But the continued deterioration of the situation made this policy difficult for his successor Nicholas I to continue without serious damage to Russian influence and prestige. Soon the tsar felt forced to act. A chance for him to intervene was supplied by serious internal disturbances within the Ottoman capital of Constantinople, resulting from military reforms introduced by Mahmud II, who was understandably concerned by the multiple threat now emerging towards his rule over south-eastern Europe.

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[664] Kallistos Ware, "The Fifth Earl of Guilford (1766-1827)and his Secret Conversion to the Orthodox Church", in Derek Baker, *The Orthodox Churches and the West* (*Studies in Church History, vol. 13),* Oxford: Blackwell, 1976, p. 254). North "adopted a Socratic purple robe and around his head wore a velvet band embroidered with olive leaves and the owl of Athens, and made the teachers wear similar garbs" (Zamoyski, *Holy Madness,* op. cit., p. 234).

[665] Harari, *Sapiens. A Brief History of Humankind,* London: Vintage, 2011, pp. 365-366.

"The disturbances started with the Janissaries, created in the fourteenth century as an elite military corps of slaves recruited from young Christian boys but which had evolved into a largely hereditary body by the early modern period, becoming corrupt and undisciplined. In 1826 the sultan, recognizing that they had become largely useless for military purposes, ordered that the Janissaries be disbanded. In the past they had on more than one occasion deposed sultans who attempted reform, and in 1826 too, most of the 135,000 members of the corps refused to obey the command. But as well as the Janissaries, Mahmud II had been recruiting a modern army on European lines, consisting of free Turks, so that when the Janissaries began fighting their way to the sultan's palace, they were quickly forced back into their barracks. The sultan's new troops bombarded the barracks, killing at least 4,000 of the mutineers; the rest fled or were imprisoned. At least 1,000 of them were taken to Thessaloniki and beheaded in what became known as the 'blood fort'. These disturbances provided the opportunity for the Russians in 1826 to impose on the sultan the Convention of Akkerman, which forced the Turks to evacuate the Romanian Principalities. In July 1827 the British, French and Russians managed to patch up their disagreements in the Treaty of London to work together for an armistice between the Greeks and the Ottomans without committing themselves to either side, and dispatched their fleets to the area. The commander of the joint fleet, the British Vice-Admiral Sir Edward Codrington (1770-1851), was less than impressed by the town of Nafplio ('the filthiest town, with the worst streets and most wretched houses, I ever saw'), the capital of the provisional Greek government in the Peloponnese, and still less by the gunfire that echoed round the streets as the different Greek factions tried to pick each other off with small-arms fire. But when the sultan refused to accept the Treaty of London, Codrington, encouraged by the British consul in Istanbul, the philhellene Stratford Canning (1786-1880), ordered his ships in October 1827 to open fire on the Turkish fleet lying at anchor in the sheltered bay of Navarino in the south-western corner of the Peloponnese. There was nowhere for the Turkish ships to escape apart from a narrow channel leading to the waiting British fleet. In three and a half hours of relentless bombardment, the Turkish fleet was sunk and Ottoman naval power destroyed.

"Both Canning and Codrington had exceeded their brief. The Duke of Wellington, commander-in-chief of the British Army at the time, was furious and publicly disowned the action. It was not in the British national interest to weaken the Ottoman Empire, because this would simply open the door to an extension of Russian power in the area. His perception was correct, but he was unwise to give it public expression. The Ottoman Sultan saw Wellington's statement as an encouragement to repudiate the Akkerman Convention and continue with his efforts to suppress the Greeks; the tsar responded by declaring war on the Ottoman Empire. Initially the campaign did not go well… but by August 1829 a Russian army was threatening

Constantinople and the Ottoman Empire seemed on the verge of collapse. Paradoxically, this provided the stimulus needed to patch up the Concert of Europe that had become so badly unstuck over the Greek rebellion. It was in nobody's interests at this stage to replace the Ottoman Empire in Europe with a disorderly collection of weak and unstable states run by bandits and revolutionaries. A conference held in London between November 1829 and February 1830 decided to establish by European agreement a small independent Greek state under a constitutional monarchy, assigned the Romanian Principalities to Russia's sphere of influence, [guaranteed the passage of Russian ships through the Straits] and committed the participants, including Russia, to abandoning any further claims on Ottoman territory in the Balkans. The Greek revolt had posed the most serious threat to the Concert of Europe so far. In the end, the Concert had held together…"[666]

The question now was: who was to lead the newly independent state of Greece? The best candidate was the former Foreign Minister of Russia Capodistrias, who was elected as 'Governor' of Greece by a National Assembly in 1827. In an encyclical to the clergy he wrote: "Speak to the hearts of the people the law of God, rightly dividing the word of truth. Announce peace. Evangelize unanimity. Teach philanthropy, love for each other, that all may be one in Christ."[667]

"Returning to the capital at Nafplio in 1828, Capodistrias introduced a new currency and implemented educational reforms, as he had done on Corfu more than two decades earlier, setting up schools, establishing a university and using his medical knowledge to establish a quarantine system against infectious diseases such as the plague. Among other things, he also introduced the potato into Greece in an effort to improve people's diet. At first, this met with deep skepticism among the peasantry, who refused to take up his offer of free distribution of seed potatoes to anyone who would plant them. Trying a new tactic, Kapodistrias had the potatoes piled up on the waterfront at Nafplio and surrounded by armed guards. This convinced local people and visitors from the countryside that these new vegetables were precious objects, and thus worth stealing. Before long, as the guards turned a blind eye, virtually all the potatoes had been taken – and their future in Greece was assured. But Kapodistrias did not take such a subtle approach in his dealings with the warring factions whose internecine rivalries were proving such an obstacle to the creation of a stable Greek state.[668] His attempts to centralize military administration and recruitment, taxation and customs revenues, met with determined opposition from the fiercely independent leading families of the Mani peninsula, where an uprising was quelled with the aid of Russian troops. Further trouble was caused by the piratical merchant ship-owners of the islands of Hydra, Spetses and Psara, who captured the ineffectual Greek national fleet, but were themselves defeated by the French navy and scuttled their own ships rather than be incorporated into a new Greek navy under central government control.

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[666] Evans, op. cit., pp. 57-59.

[667] *Boanerges* (Esphigmenou monastery, Mount Athos) 24, March-April, 2006, p. 32.

[668] "He dismissed the primates as 'Christian Turks', the military chieftains as 'robbers', the intelligentsia as 'fools' and the Phanariots as 'children of Satan'" (Clogg, op. cit., p. 46). (V.M.)

"The most dangerous opposition to Kapodistrias came from the Mavromichalis family, one of the turbulent and powerful clans based on the Mani peninsula. In an attempt to bring the clan to heel, Kapodistrias imprisoned its leading figure, Petrobey Mavromichalis (1785-1848), formerly governor of the peninsula under the Ottomans. Outraged at this insult to their honour, Petrobey's two brothers decided to follow local tradition and assassinate Kapodistrias. They were waiting for him as he went to church on 9 October 1831. As Kapodistrias made to enter the building, one of the brothers shot him in the head, while the other stabbed him through the lungs…"[669]

Misha Glenny summarizes the rule of Kapodistrias thus: "Although [he] attempted to integrate the various factions into his system of authoritarian government, he underestimated the strength of particularism. All sides distinguished themselves by their appalling behavior. The Hydriots, who had excelled themselves during the war, mounted an insurrection in August 1831 so bitter that they preferred to scuttle their entire fleet, the only real source of independent Greek power, rather than see it come under central government control. By imprisoning Petrobey, the Maniot leader of the Mavromichalis family, Capodistrias sealed his own fate."

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[669] Evans, op. cit., pp. 60-61

48. THE DECEMBRIST REBELLION

The wave of revolutionary violence rolling through Southern Europe reached Russia after the supposed death of Tsar Alexander I on November 19, 1825. According to a rather strong tradition, his death in Taganrog was actually staged, and he in fact became a hermit in Tomsk in Siberia under the name Theodore Kuzmich until his death in 1864, being blessed to undertake this path by Seraphim of Sarov.[670] This tradition has received confirmation recently from graphological experts.[671]

Discontent and even open rebellion against the Sovereign on the part of the nobility was a characteristic feature of eighteenth-century Russia. "Royal blood," writes I.P. Yakobi, "became terribly cheap in this century: rebellion and regicide became not only safe, but even profitable occupations. Tolstoy enticed the Tsarevich Alexis to inevitable death; the Preobrazhensky officers overthrew the lawful Tsar Ioann Antonovich; Orlov brutally killed Emperor Peter III. These not only did not suffer any punishment, but were showered with royal favours. And if Alexander the Blessed did not act in the same way with the murderers of his father, they in any case remained in honour, and the names of Zubov, Panin and Bennigsen were not linked in the popular imagination with the thought of shame or the horror of regicide.

"Rebellion and malice in relation to the Monarch takes hold of the upper class every time the ship of state goes in a direction not ordered by them, or even when it considers its own interests affected.

"Even Alexander the Blessed, the liberator of the Fatherland from the invasion of twelve nations and the deliverer of Europe from the heavy yoke of Napoleon, even Alexander I, the softest, most charming, most 'liberal' of the Russian tsars, was subjected in the Petersburg salons to malicious and open attacks whose boldness amazed foreign diplomats…

"Such was the judgement not only of foreigners, who were perhaps insufficiently informed. The Empress Elizabeth Alexeyevna wrote to her mother about absolutely the same popular opinion, which 'shouts in a terrible way'. Elizabeth Alexeyevna also condemns the relatives of the Sovereign: 'on her part the (Dowager) Empress, as a consequence of that boundless love of honour, which forces her to flatter popular opinion in all circumstances so as to increase her own popularity, was the first to give an example of discontent and began loudly to condemn the political behaviour of her son… I cannot express to You how this disturbs me!' Then, speaking about the rebelliousness of Grand Duke Konstantin Pavlovich, Elizabeth Alexeyevna adds: "I assure you that at times it seems to me that our dear Sovereign, who is better than all his relatives, has been sold and betrayed by his own family.'

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[670] See Alexis S. Troubtezkoy, *Imperial Legend. The Disappearance of Tsar Alexander I,* Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2003; *Tainstvennij Starets Feodor Kuzmich v Sibiri i Imperator Aleksandr I* (The Mysterious Elder Theodore Kuzmich and Alexander I), Jordanville, N.Y.: Holy Trinity Monastery, 1972, R. Régis, *Les Mystères de l'Histoire,* Paris: Larousse, pp. 78-87, Anna Liesowska, "Russian tsar 'lived secretly as monk in Siberia' for decades after history books say he died", *The Siberian Times,* April 10, 2018, http://siberiantimes.com/other/others/news/n0326-new-handwriting-analysis-suggests-russia-tsar-did-not-die-as-history-books-said/

[671] "Grafolog: u Aleksandra I i startsa Fedora odinakovie pocherki", *Novosti v Tomske,* July 24, 2015, http://news.vtomske.ru/news/108988.html. Moreover, in November, 2015, during a press conference, Bishop Tikhon (Shevkhunov) announced that the tomb of Tsar Alexander I had been found to be empty in 1921…

"That was the mood in 1809. How did society relate to his Majesty Alexander Pavlovich when the threat of 1812 appeared?

"Moscow was inundated with Frenchmen, the people's army was exerting every effort to save the Fatherland. But Grand Duchess Catherine Pavlovna wrote to the Sovereign: 'Dissatisfaction has reached it peak, and you personally are far from being spared. If this reaches even me, then judge for yourself about the rest. Everyone is openly blaming you for the misfortune of Your Empire, for the ruin of everyone and everything, and finally for your sacrifice of the honour of the country and your own honour… Do not fear a catastrophe in the shape of a revolution, no! But think what must be the situation in a country whose head is despised: there is nothing people would not do to re-establish their own honour, but in spite of a passionate desire to sacrifice everything for the Homeland, they say: how will all this end when everything is perishing and is being destroyed as a result of incompetence of the leaders? Fortunately, the thought of peace is not in anyone's mind, on the contrary: even the feeling of shame for the loss of Moscow elicits a desire for revenge. But they condemn You, and without inhibition; I consider it my duty to tell You about this, since it is too important…

"This letter is dated September 12, 1812. A month later Napoleon had fled from Moscow, and three months later – the Russian armies had crossed the frontier. In eighteen months Alexander I, who had 'lost his honour', triumphantly entered Paris and was glorified by the whole of Europe as her saviour, while the 'incompetent' Russian leaders became historic national heroes… "[672]

But the virus of rebellion was not destroyed… The Decembrist conspiracy began when thirty officers founded a Union of Salvation in 1816. They then divided into a constitutionalist Northern Society based in St. Petersburg and a more radical Southern society based in Tulchin, headquarters of the Second Army in the Ukraine.

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[672] Yakobi, *Imperator Nikolaj II i Revoliutsia* (Emperor Nicholas II and the Revolution), Moscow, 2010, pp. 59, 60-61.

"In the ideology of the Northern Society especially," writes Walicki, "there were certain elements reminiscent of the views of the aristocratic opposition of the reign of Catherine II. Many of the members in this branch of the Decembrist movement were descendants of once powerful and now impoverished boyar families… Nikita Muraviev claimed that the movement was rooted in the traditions of Novgorod and Pskov, of the twelfth-century Boyar Duma, of the constitutional demands presented to Anne by the Moscow nobility in 1730, and of the eighteenth-century aristocratic opposition. The poet Kondraty Ryleev painted an idealized portrait of Prince Andrei Kurbsky (the leader of the boyar revolt against Ivan the Terrible) and even devoted one of his 'elegies' to him…In his evidence before the Investigating Commission after the suppression of the revolt, Petr Kakhovsky stated that the movement was primarily a response to the high-handedness of the bureaucracy, the lack of respect for ancient gentry freedom, and the favoritism shown to foreigners. Another Northern Decembrist, the writer and literary critic Aleksandr Bestuzhev… wrote that his aim was 'monarchy tempered by aristocracy'. These and similar facts explain Pushkin's view, expressed in the 1830's, that the Decembrist revolt had been the last episode in the age-old struggle between autocracy and boyars…

"The Decembrists used the term 'republic' loosely, without appearing to be fully aware that there were essential differences between, for instance, the Roman republic, the Polish gentry republic, the old Russian city states, and modern bourgeois republics… Muraviev modelled his plan for a political system on the United States… The theorists of the Northern Society made no distinction between criticism of absolutism from the standpoint of the gentry and similar criticism from a bourgeois point of view. Hence they saw no difficulty in reconciling liberal notions taken largely from the works of Bentham, Benjamin Constant and Adam Smith with an idealization of former feudal liberties and a belief in the role of the aristocracy as a 'curb on despotism'. The theoretical premise here was the 'juridical world view' of the Enlightenment, according to which legal and political forms determined the revolution of society."[673]

The Northern Decembrists were in favour of the emancipation of the serfs. However, they insisted that the land should remain with the gentry, thereby ensuring the continued dependence of the serfs on the gentry. "The conviction that the peasants ought to be overjoyed merely at the abolition of serfdom was shared by many Decembrists. Yakushkin, for instance, could not conceal his exasperation at his peasants' demand for land when he offered to free them. When they were told that the land would remain the property of the landlord, their answer was: 'Then things had better stay as they were. We belong to the master, but the land belongs to us.'"[674]

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[673] Walicki, op. cit., pp. 58, 59, 60.
[674] Walicki, op. cit., p. 61.

The Northern Decembrists worked out a new interpretation of Russian history conceived "as an antithesis to Karamzin's theory of the beneficial role of autocracy". "An innate Russian characteristic, the Decembrists maintained – one that later developments had blunted but not destroyed – was a deep-rooted love of liberty. Autocracy had been unknown in Kievan Russia: the powers of the princes had been strictly circumscribed there and decisions on important affairs of state were taken by the popular assemblies. The Decembrists were especially ardent admirers of the republican city-states of Novgorod and Pskov. This enthusiasm was of practical significance, since they were convinced that the 'spirit of liberty' that had once imbued their forbears was still alive; let us but strike the bell, and the people of Novgorod, who have remained unchanged throughout the centuries, will assemble by the bell tower, Ryleev declared. Kakhovsky described the peasant communes with their self-governing *mir* as 'tiny republics', a living survival of Russian liberty. In keeping with this conception, the Decembrists thought of themselves as *restoring* liberty and bringing back a form of government that had sound historical precedents."[675]

This reinterpretation of Russian history was false. Russia was imbued with the spirit of Orthodox autocracy and patriarchy: the "republics" of Pskov and Novgorod were exceptions to the historical rule. And if Kievan autocracy was less powerful than the Muscovite or Petersburg autocracies, this was not necessarily to its advantage. Russia succumbed to the Mongols because the dividedness of her princes precluded a united defence. And there can be little doubt that she would not have survived into the nineteenth century as an independent Orthodox nation if she had not been an autocracy.

The leader of the Southern Society, Colonel Pavel Pestel, had more radical ideas in his draft for a constitution, *Russian Justice*, which was based on two assumptions: "that every man has a natural right to exist and thus to a piece of land large enough to allow him to make a basic living; and that only those who create surplus wealth have a right to enjoy it. After the overthrow of tsarism, therefore, Pestel proposed to divide land into two equal sectors: the first would be public property (or, more accurately, the property of the communes); the second would be in private hands. The first would be used to ensure everyone a minimum living, whereas the second would be used to create surplus wealth. Every citizen was entitled to ask his commune for an allotment large enough to support a family; if the commune had more land available, he would even be able to demand several such allotments. The other sector would remain in private hands. Pestel felt that his program ensured every individual a form of social welfare in the shape of a communal land allotment but also left scope for unlimited initiative and the opportunity of making a fortune in the private sector.

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[675] Walicki, op. cit., p. 67.

"Pestel believed that his program had every chance of success since land ownership in Russia had traditionally been both communal and private. Here he obviously had in mind the Russian village commune; it should be emphasized, however, that Pestel's commune differed essentially from the feudal *obshchina* in that it did not restrict its members' movement or personal freedom and did not impose collective responsibility for individual members' tax liabilities."[676]

In 1823 Alexander I was given a list of the future "Decembrists". But he refused to act against them. Protopriest Lev Lebedev explains why: "'It is not for me to punish them,' said his Majesty, and cast the paper into the fire. 'I myself shared their views in my youth,' he added. That means that now, in 1823, Alexander I evaluated these diversions of his youth *as sin*, which also had to receive their retribution. Neither he nor [Grand Duke] Constantine [his brother] *had the spiritual, moral right to punish* the plotters, insofar as both of them had been guilty of *the plot* against their own father! That was the essence of the matter! Only he had the right *to punish* who had in no way been involved in the parricide and the revolutionary delusions – that is, the younger brother *Nicholas*. It was to him that the reins of the government of Russia were handed."[677]

The rebellion took place on December 14, 1825, when a group of army officers attempted to seize power in St. Petersburg. It was crushed by Tsar Nicholas I.

On the investigation committee into the crimes of the conspirators he placed Count Alexander Khristoforovich Benckendorff, future head of the Gendarmes and secret police. At the first interrogation Benckendorff gathered all the accused and said to them: "You affirm that you rebelled for the sake of freedom for the serfs? Very praiseworthy. I ask those of you who gave this same freedom to the serfs – who did not cast them out on the street to die as homeless dogs, their heads under a fence, but released them from the land while helping them to relocate – to raise your hands. If there are such people among you, then their case will be shelved, since they have truly acted in accordance with their own conscience. I'm waiting. Nobody? How strange…

"I released my serfs in Lithuania in 1816, and those in Tambov in 1818. They all left the land with funds to make a new start. I paid the taxes of each one of them for five years in advance to the state purse. And I do not consider myself to be a liberal or liberator! It's more advantageous to me this way. These people work better for themselves. I earn on grinding and timber-felling – and from my former serfs. I have already covered all my expenses and made a profit on all that. And I don't come out onto the square with declarations and protests against his Majesty or, even less, the Empire. And so there is no way you can prove that this affair is political. We will judge you as rebels and traitors of the Fatherland like Emelyan Pugachev. And now, all of you, to your cells! You will go on the same convoy with the criminals, you swine!"

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[676] Walicki, op. cit., pp. 62-63.

[677] Lebedev, *Velikorossia,* St. Petersburg, 1997, p. 291.

579 people were arrested and brought to trial. 40 were given the death sentence and the rest – hard labour. In the end only five were executed;[678] the soldiers were flogged. The five, writes Sir Richard Evans, "were hanged before a large crowd; as the ropes split, saving the lives of the condemned men, the crowd clamored for mercy, in a tradition that regarded such occurrences as the expression of God's will; but the implacable Tsar Nicholas I ordered new ropes to be attached to the gallows and the hanging went ahead…"[679]

In August, 1826 Tsar Nicholas confirmed the ban on Masonry.

"And so *for the first time* in Russian history," writes Lebedev, "a rebellion of the nobility had as its aim not the removal of one sovereign by another, but the annihilation of tsarist power altogether… It became clear that [the Decembrists'] links in 'society' were so significant and deep, and the sympathy for them so broad, that one could speak of a betrayal of the Throne and Church – or, at any rate, of the unreliability – *of the noble class as a whole*."[680]

V.F. Ivanov writes: "As an eyewitness put it, the rebellion in Petersburg shocked the general mass of the population of Russia profoundly. In his words, 'the attempt to limit the Tsar's power and change the form of government seemed to us not only sacrilege, but an historical anomaly; while the people, seeing that the plotters belonged exclusively to the upper class, considered the nobility to be traitors, and this added one more sharp feature to that secret hatred which it nourished towards the landowners. Only the progressives and the intelligentsia of the capital sympathized with the unfortunate madmen' (Schilder).

"The best people turned away from the affair in disgust and branded the work of the Mason-Decembrists that of Cain. In the words of Karamzin: 'Look at the stupid story of our mad liberals! Pray God that not so many real rogues are found among them. The soldiers were only victims of a deception.

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[678] One of those executed was Sergius Ivanovich Muraviev-Apostol, a leader of the southern society. In his *Catechesis* we find a strong Christian element, but a tirade against the tsars for having "seized the people's freedom" and a confession that he wanted to kill the tsar (http://decemb.hobby.ru/index.shtml?archive/pokaz5).

[679] Evans, *The Pursuit of Power,* London: Penguin, 2017, p. 433. "In the 1820s there was only one execution per 100,000 population in Russia, a ration that continued roughly for the rest of the century." (op. cit., p. 433)

[680] Lebedev, op. cit., p. 318.

Sometimes a fine day begins with a storm: may it be thus in the new reign… God saved us from a great disaster on December 14…'"[681]

In 1826 Karamzin wrote: "Liberals! What do you want? The happiness of men? But is there happiness where there is death, illness, vices, passions?… For a moral being there is no good without freedom: but this freedom is given not by his Majesty, not by Parliament, but by each of us to ourselves, with the help of God. We must conquer freedom in our hearts by peace of conscience and trust in Providence!"[682] And Metropolitan Philaret said in the same year: "It's becoming clearer and clearer from what horrors and iniquities God delivered us, when He strengthened His Majesty on December 14. Pray that this evil will be completely annihilated by righteousness and wisdom. But there are people who, after talking previously about the visitation of God, are now talking about the wrath of God on us."[683]

The Decembrists were romantic dreamers rather than hardened revolutionaries. Thus one of their leaders, the poet Ryleev, mounted the scaffold with a volume of Byron in his hands.[684] Another, Count Sergius Volkonsky, broke down in tears on hearing of the death of Nicholas I.[685]

But their dreaminess did not make them less dangerous. Nor were they real democrats: as Alexis Khomiakov said, they "preferred the tyranny of an armed minority to one-man rule". And their naivety did not diminish the evil effect of their words and deeds on succeeding generations. From now on, Russian liberals could appeal to the example of the "heroic" Decembrists in their struggle against the Orthodox autocracy…

A clear example, according to Sir Isaiah Berlin, was Alexander Herzen, who declared that the hanging of the Decembrist conspirators "was the critical turning-point of his life; whether this was so or not, the memory of these aristocratic martyrs in the cause of Russian constitutional liberty later became a sacred symbol to him, as to many others of his class and generation, and affected him for the rest of his days. He tells us that a few years after this, he and his intimate friend Nick Ogarev, standing on the Sparrow Hills above Moscow, took a solemn 'Hannibalic' oath to avenge these fighters for the rights of man, and to dedicate their own lives to the cause for which they died…"[686]

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[681] Ivanov, op. cit., pp. 307-308.

[682] Yakovlev, op. cit., p. 143.

[683] Yakovlev, op. cit., p. 130.

[684] Benita Eisler, *Byron*, London: Penguin books, 1999, p. 753.

[685] Figes, op. cit., p. 143. He also petitioned to serve as a private in the Crimean war, which he saw as a return to the spirit of 1812. Figes sees Volkonsky as the link between the Decembrists and the Populists of a later generation. He wrote to his son in 1857: "I gave my blessing when you went into the service of the Fatherland and the Tsar. But I always taught you to conduct yourself without lordly airs when dealing with your comrades from a different class (op. cit., pp. 143-143).

As I.P. Yakobi pointed out, "the corruption of the upper classes could not fail to influence the other strata of society. From the nobility the revolutionary turmoil spread to the new class of the intelligentsia, and there appeared organized terror. The assassins followed on the heels of the Russian Tsars. Emperor Alexander II was killed by the members of the "People's Freedom' movement. His successor was saved by a miracle. His grandson, Nicholas II, together with the whole of his family, found a martyric death at the hands of the heirs of the Decembrists – the Bolsheviks."[687]

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[686] Berlin, "Herzen and his Memoirs", in *The Proper Study of Mankind,* London: Pimlico, 1998, p. 503.

[687] Yakobi, *Imperator Nikolai II i Revoliutsia (*Emperor Nicholas II and the Revolution), Moscow, 2010, p. 62.

49. ST. SERAPHIM OF SAROV

Just before the rebellion, a young officer-Decembrist came up to a hermit in the great woods of Sarov, St. Seraphim, the most famous Russian saint of modern times. "Taking off his cap," the soldier "asked for his blessing. The usually meek and quiet elder Seraphim was suddenly filled with such anger as nobody had ever seen in him. He began to shout loudly at the officer and cursed him. The unfortunate one, struck as if by thunder, went away, swaying from the shock and forgetting to put on his cap… An involuntary witness of the event had been a young monk who had brought Elder Seraphim some food. 'Did you see?' the elder asked him. 'I saw,' replied the monk. The elder pointed at the source, which he had so carefully tended: 'Look!' The monk glanced and saw that the source of grace-filled water, which had healed many sick people, and which had always been clean and transparent, this time had become completely disturbed. 'That's how these gentlemen want to disturb Russia,' said St. Seraphim. Soon Russia learned of the plot and the attempt at rebellion of the 'Decembrists' (the officer was one of them)…"[688]

In 1844 Nicholas Alexandrovich Motovilov, a nobleman of Simbirsk province and a close friend of the saint, made notes of his conversations with him. At the beginning of the twentieth century Sergius Alexandrovich Nilus found these notes and published them as follows:-

"… As a demonstration of true zeal for God Batyushka Seraphim cited the holy Prophet Elijah and Gideon, and for hours at a time he talked in an inspired manner about them. Every judgement that he made about them was concluded by its application to life, precisely our own life, and with an indication of how we… can draw soul-saving instructions from their lives. He often spoke to me about the holy King, Prophet and Ancestor of God David, at which point he went into an extraordinary spiritual rapture. How one had to see him during those unearthly minutes! His face, inspired by the grace of the Holy Spirit, shone like the sun, and I – I speak the truth – on looking at him felt in my eyes as if I was looking at the sun. I involuntarily recalled the face of Moses when he had just come down from Sinai. My soul, pacified, entered such a quiet, and was filled with such great joy, that my heart was ready to embrace within itself not only the whole human race, but also the whole creation of God, pouring out in love towards everything that is of God…

"'So, your Godbelovedness, so,' Batyushka used to say, leaping from joy (those who still remember this holy elder will relate how he would sometimes be seen leaping from joy), '"I have chosen David my servant, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will"'…

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[688] Lebedev, op. cit., p. 295. Platonov (op. cit., p. 265) believes that the Decembrist was Pestel.

"In explaining how good it was to serve the Tsar and how much his life should be held dear, he gave as an example Abishai, David's war-commander.

"'Once,' said Batyushka Seraphim, 'to satisfy the thirst of David, he stole in to a spring in view of the enemy camp and got water, and, in spite of a cloud of arrows released at him from the enemy camp, returned to him completely unharmed, bringing the water in his helmet. He had been saved from the cloud of arrows only because of his zeal towards the King. But when David gave an order, Abishai replied: "Only command, O King, and everything will be done in accordance with your will." But when the King expressed the desire to take part himself in some bloody deed to encourage his warriors, Abishai besought him to preserve his health and, stopping him from participating in the battle, said: "There are many of us, your Majesty, but you are one among us. Even if all of us were killed, as long as you were alive, Israel would be whole and unconquered. But if you are gone, then what will become of Israel?"…'

"Batyushka Fr. Seraphim loved to explain himself at length, praising the zeal and ardour of faithful subjects to the Tsar, and desiring to explain more clearly how these two Christian virtues are pleasing to God, he said:

"'After Orthodoxy, these are our first Russian duty and the chief foundation of true Christian piety.'[689]

"Often from David he changed the subject to our great Emperor [Nicholas I] and for hours at a time talked to me about him and about the Russian kingdom, bewailing those who plotted evil against his August Person. Clearly revealing to me what they wanted to do, he led me into a state of horror; while speaking about the punishment prepared for them from the Lord, and in confirmation of his words, he added:

"'This will happen without fail: the Lord, seeing the impenitent spite of their hearts, will permit their undertakings to come to pass for a short period, but their illness will turn upon their heads, and the unrighteousness of their destructive plots will descend upon them. The Russian land will be reddened with streams of blood, and many noblemen will be killed for his great Majesty and the integrity of his Autocracy: but the Lord will not be wroth to the end, and will not allow the Russian land to be destroyed to the end, because in it alone will Orthodoxy and the remnants of Christian piety be especially preserved.

"Once," as Motovilov continued in his notes, "I was in great sorrow, thinking what would happen in the future with our Orthodox Church if the evil contemporary to us would be multiplied more and more. And being convinced that our Church was in an extremely pitiful state both from the great amount of carnal debauchery and… from the spiritual impiety of godless opinions sown everywhere by the most recent false teachers, I very much wanted to know what Batyushka Seraphim would tell me about this.

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[689] Quoted also by in S. Nilus, "Chto zhdet Rossiu?", *Moskovskie Vedomosti*, N 68, 1905 (V.M.).

"Discussing the holy Prophet Elijah in detail, he said in reply to my question, among other things, the following:

"'Elijah the Thesbite complained to the Lord about Israel as if it had wholly bowed the knee to Baal, and said in prayer that only he, Elijah, had remained faithful to Lord, but now they were seeking his soul, too, to take it… So what, batyushka, did the Lord reply to this? "I have left seven thousand men in Israel who have not bowed the knee to Baal." So if in the kingdom of Israel, which had fallen away from the kingdom of Judah that was faithful to God, and had come to a state of complete corruption, there still remained seven thousand men faithful to the Lord, then what shall we say about Russia? I think that at that time there were no more than three million in the kingdom of Israel at that time. And how many do we have in Russia now, batyushka?'

"I replied: 'About sixty million.'

"And he continued: 'Twenty times more. Judge for yourself how many more of those faithful to God that brings!… So, batyushka, those whom He foreknew, He also predestined; and those whom He predestined, He also called; and those whom He called, He guards, and those He also glorifies… So what is there for us to be despondent about!… God is with us! He who hopes in the Lord is as Mount Sion, and the Lord is round about His people… The Lord will keep you, the Lord will protect you on your right hand, the Lord will preserve your coming in and your going out now and to the ages; the sun will not burn you by day, nor the moon by night.'

"And when I asked him what this meant, and to what end he was talking to me about it:

"'To the end,' replied Batyushka Fr. Seraphim, 'that you should know that in this way the Lord guards His people as the apple of His eye, that is, the Orthodox Christians, who love Him and with all their heart, and all their mind, in word and deed, day and night serve Him. And such are those who completely observe all the commandments, dogmas and traditions of our Eastern Universal Church, and confess the piety handed down by it with their lips, and really, in all the circumstances of life, act according to the holy commandments of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

"In confirmation of the fact that there were still many in the Russian land who remained faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ, who lived in Orthodoxy and piety, batyushka Fr. Seraphim once said to one acquaintance of mine… that once, when he was in the Spirit, he saw the whole land of Russia, and it was filled and as it were covered with the smoke of the prayers of believers praying to the Lord…"[690]

St. Seraphim prophesied: "More than half a century will pass. Then evildoers will raise their heads high. This will happen without fail: the Lord, seeing the impenitent evil of their hearts, will allow their enterprises for a short time. But their sickness will rebound upon their own heads, and the unrighteousness of their destructive plots will fall upon them. The Russian land will become red with rivers of blood... Before the birth of the Antichrist there will be a great, protracted war and a terrible revolution in Russia passing all bounds of human imagination, for the bloodletting will be most terrible: the rebellions of Ryazan, Pugachev and the French revolution will be nothing in comparison with what will take place in Russia. Many people who are faithful to the fatherland will perish, church property and the monasteries will be robbed; the Lord's churches will be desecrated; good rich people will be robbed and killed, rivers of Russian blood will flow…"[691]

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It was not only in his gifts of prophecy and miracle-working that St. Seraphim was renowned. People of all classes streamed to him from all over Russia to receive his God-inspired wisdom. Motovilov was one of his chosen friends, and in a famous conversation the saint revealed to him an almost forgotten but vitally important truth, that the aim of the Christian life is to acquire the Holy Spirit, which is accomplished through good works, especially prayer, carried out in the name of Christ:-

"'But father,' said I [Motovilov], ' you continue to dwell on the acquisition of the grace of the Holy Spirit as the aim of the Christian life. How and where can I see it? Good deeds are visible. Is the Holy Spirit then to be seen? How am going to know whether He is with me or not?'

"'At the present time,' the elder replied, 'thanks to our almost universal indifference to the holy faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and thanks to our inattentiveness to the working of His Divine purpose to us and of the communion between man and God, we have come to this, that one might say that we have almost entirely departed from the true Christian life. Those words seem strange to us now that the Spirit of God spake by the lips of Moses: And Adam saw the Lord walking in paradise; or those words which read in the Apostle Paul: We went to Achaia and the Spirit of God came not with us, we returned to Macedonia and the Spirit of God came with us. More than once in other passages of Holy Scripture is told the story of God's appearance to men. Some people say these passages are incomprehensible; could men really see God? But there is nothing incomprehensible here. This failure to understand comes about because we have wandered from the spacious vision of early Christians. Under the pretext of education we have received such a darkness of ignorance that now to us seems inconceivable what the ancients saw so clearly that even in ordinary conversation the notion of God's appearance did not seem strange to them. Men saw God and the grace of the Holy Spirit, not in sleep or in a dream, or in the excitement of a disordered imagination, but truly, in the light of day. We have become very inattentive to the work of our salvation, whence it comes about that many other words also in the Holy Scriptures we do not take in the proper sense; and all because we do not allow it to enter our souls, and therefore we have no true enlightenment from the Lord, which is sent into the hearts of men, to all who hunger and thirst in heart for God's truth.

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[690] Yu.K. Begunov, A.D. Stepanov, K.Yu. Dushenov (eds.), *Tajna Bezzakonia (The Mystery of Iniquity)*, St. Petersburg, 2000, pp. 61-64.

[691] St. Seraphim, quoted by Protopriest Victor Potapov, "*God is betrayed by silence*". See also *Literaturnaya Ucheba*, January-February, 1991, pp. 131-134.

"'When our Lord Jesus Christ had accomplished the whole work of salvation, after His resurrection, He breathed on the Apostles to restore the breath of life which had been lost by Adam, and gave them the same grace of the Holy Spirit of God which had been Adam's. On the Day of Pentecost He triumphantly sent down on them the Holy Spirit in the rushing of a mighty wind like tongues of fire, which sat upon each one of them and entered in and filled them with the strength of Divine flame-like grace; whose breath is laden with dew, and it creates joy in the souls partaking of its power and influence. And, when this same fire-inspired grace of the Holy Spirit is given to all the faithful in Christ in the sacrament of Holy Baptism, they seal it in the chief places appointed by the Holy Church on our flesh, as the eternal vessel of this grace. The words are: "The seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit." On what do we miserable creatures set our seal except on the vessels which preserve some precious treasure? But what can be higher and more precious than the gifts of the Holy Spirit sent us from above in the sacrament of Baptism? For this baptismal grace is so great, so necessary, so life-giving for man, that it will never be taken away even from the heretic until his very death; that is, until the term which has been set by the Providence of God to man's earthly trial – for what will he be of use and what will he accomplish in the time and with the grace given him by God? If we were never to sin after our baptism, we should remain for ever holy, spotless, exempt from all foulness of flesh and spirit, like the saints of God. But the trouble is that, though we increase in stature, we do not increased in the grace and mind of God, as our Lord Jesus Christ increased; but on the contrary, growing dissipated bit by bit, we are deprived of the grace of God's Holy Spirit and become sinners of many degrees and many sins. But, when a man, stirred by the Divine Wisdom which seeks our salvation, is resolved for her sake to rise early before God and keep watch for the attainment of his eternal salvation, then must he in obedience to her voice hasten to acquire the Holy Spirit, which works in us and sets up in us the kingdom of God. Notwithstanding man's repeated falls, notwithstanding the darkness around the soul, the grace of the Holy Spirit which is given at our baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit shines still in the heart with the Divine immemorial light of the precious merits of Christ. When the sinner turns to the way of repentance, this Christ Light smooths out all trace of past sin and clothes the former sinner once more in a robe of incorruption woven from the grace of the Holy Spirit, about the acquisition of which, as the aim of the Christian life, I have been speaking so long.

"'Still more clearly will I tell you, that you may the more clearly know what to understand by the grace of God, how to recognize it and how in particular its actions are revealed in those enlightened therewith. The grace of the Holy Spirit is the light which lighteneth man. The Lord has more than once revealed for many witnesses the working of the grace of the Holy Spirit in those whom He has sanctified and illumined by His great outpourings. Think of Moses after his talk with God on Mount Sinai. People were unable to look on him, with such unwonted radiance did he blaze; he was even forced to appear before the people under a veil. Think of the Lord's Transfiguration on Mount Tabor: His garments were glistering like snow and His disciples fell on their face for fear. When Moses and Elias appeared to Him, then, in order to hide the effulgence of the light of God's grace from blinding the eyes of the disciples, a cloud, it is written, overshadowed them. Thus the grace of God's Holy Spirit appears in light inexpressible to all to whom God reveals its power.'

"'How then,' I asked Father Seraphim, 'am I to know that I am in the grace of the Holy Spirit?'

"'It's very simple, my son,' he replied; 'wherefore the Lord says: All things are simple to them that get understanding, the Apostles always perceive whether the Spirit of God abideth in them or not, and, being filled with understanding and seeing the presence of God's Spirit with them, they affirmed that their work was holy and pleasing to God. By this is explained why they wrote in their epistles: It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us. Only on these grounds did they offer their epistles as immutable truth for the good of all the faithful. Thus the Holy Apostles were consciously aware of the presence in themselves of God's Spirit. And so you see, my son, how simple it is!'

"I replied:

"'Nevertheless, I do not understand how I can be firmly assured that I am in the Spirit of God. How can I myself recognize His true manifestation?'

"Father Seraphim replied:

"'I have already told you, my son, that it is very simple and have in detail narrated to you how men dwell in the Spirit of God and how one must apprehend His appearance in us. What then do you need?'

"'My need,' said I, 'is to understand this well!'

"Then Father Seraphim took me firmly by the shoulders and said:

"'We are both together, son, in the Spirit of God! Why lookest thou not on me?'

"'I cannot look, Father, because lightning flashes from your eyes. Your face is brighter than the sun and my eyes ache in pain!'

"Father Seraphim said:

"'Fear not, my son, you too have become as bright as I. You too are now in the fullness of God's Spirit; otherwise you would not be able to look on me as I am.'

"Then, bending his head towards me, he whispered softly into my ear:

"Give thanks to the Lord God for His ineffable mercy! You have seen that I did not even cross myself, and only in my heart I prayed mentally to the Lord God and said within myself: Lord, vouchsafe to him to see clearly with bodily eyes that glory. And see, my son, the Lord has fulfilled in a trice the humble prayer of poor Seraphim. Surely we must give thanks to Him for His ineffable gift to us both!'"[692]

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[692] G.P. Fedotov, *A Treasury of Russian Spirituality*, Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1969, pp. 27-274.

50. RUSSIAN HEGELIANISM

The failure of the Decembrist rebellion, and the reaction that set in under Nicholas I, created a special breed of young men, usually but not always from the nobility, educated for public service but unwilling to serve because of their alienation from the regime, but wishing to serve "the people" in some unspecified way. They gathered together in discussion circles, or *kruzhki,* where they discussed literature, art, philosophy and politics with great intensity and enthusiasm. "The content of their discussions," writes Hosking, "was shaped by the post-Decembrist situation, by the yawning gap between thought and deed, between noble moral intentions and abject practical failure. The French Enlightenment thought on which the Decembrists had been nurtured did not offer an explanation of either the gap or the failure. But the new German idealist philosophy, just beginning to penetrate in Russia in the 1820s, did suggest some insights and some hope. Kant's postulate that our understanding of reality is shaped by the categories of the human mind, such as space, time and causality, was developed – or distorted – in later German thinkers into the view that the human mind in some sense 'creates' understandable reality…"[693]

Many of these *intelligenty* did not simply discuss philosophy at home, in Moscow or St. Petersburg, but went to Germany and listened to the lectures of Hegel himself, and of other important German philosophers such as Kant and Schelling. The influence of these lectures on the Russian intelligentsia lasted deep into the nineteenth century. Pushkin satirized this influence in *Evgeny Onegin* in the figure of

Vladimir Lensky, just returning
From Göttingen with soulful yearning,
Was in his prime – a handsome youth
And poet filled with Kantian truth.[1]

"In Russia, as elsewhere," writes Richard Pipes, "the principal consequence of Idealism was greatly to enhance the creative role of the human mind. Kant's critique of empirical theories had this inadvertent result that it transformed the mind from a mere recipient of sensory impressions into an active participant in the process of cognition. The manner in which intelligence, through its inbuilt categories, perceived reality was in itself an essential attribute of that reality. With this argument, the Idealist school which sprung up to overshadow Empiricism, gave a weapon to all those interested in promoting the human mind as the supreme creative force – that is, in the first place, the intellectuals. It was now possible to argue that ideas were every bit as 'real' as physical facts, if not more so. 'Thought' broadly defined to include feelings, sensations, and, above all, creative artistic impulses was raised to a status of equality with 'Nature'. Everything fitted together; nothing was accidental: intelligence merely had to grasp how phenomena related to ideas. 'I owe to Schelling the habit I now have of generalizing the least events and the most insignificant phenomena which I encounter', wrote V.F. Odoevskii, a leading Schellingian of the 1820s. In the late 1830s when Russian intellectuals became drunk on Hegel, the addiction acquired extreme forms. Alexander Herzen, having returned from exile, found his Moscow friends in a kind of collective delirium:

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[693] Pushkin, in Hosking, op. cit., p. 269.

"'Nobody at this time would have disowned such as sentence as this: "The concrescence of abstract ideas in the sphere of the plastic represents that phase of the self-questing spirit in which it, defining itself for itself, is potentialized from natural immanence into the harmonious sphere of the formal consciousness in beauty"… Everything that *in fact* is most immediate, all the simplest feelings were erected into abstract categories and returned from thence as pale, algebraic ghosts, without a drop of living blood… A man who went for a walk… went not just for a walk, but in order to give himself over to the pantheistic feelings of his identification with the cosmos. If, on the way, he met a tipsy soldier or a peasant woman who tried to strike up a conversation, the philosopher did not simply talk with them, he determined the substantiality of the popular element, both in its immediate and its accidental manifestations. The very tear which might arise to his eye was strictly referred to its proper category: to *Gemüth* or the "tragic element in the heart".'

"Secondly, and only slightly less importantly, Idealism injected into philosophy a dynamic element. It conceived reality, both in its spiritual and physical aspects, as undergoing constant evolution, as 'becoming' rather than 'being'. The entire cosmos was evolving, the process leading towards a vaguely defined goal of a perfectly free and rational existence. This 'historicist' element, present in all Idealist doctrines, has become ever since an indispensable ingredient of all 'ideologies'. It gave and continues to give the intelligentsia the assurance that the reality with which they happen to be surrounded and in varying degrees repudiate is by the very nature of things transitory, a stepping stone to something superior. Furthermore, it allows them to argue that whatever discrepancy there might exist between their ideas and reality is due to the fact that reality, as it were, has not yet caught up with their ideas. Failure is always temporary for ideologues, as success is always seen by them to be illusory for the powers that be.

"The net effect of Idealism was to inspire Russian intellectuals with a self-confidence which they had never possessed before. Mind was linked with nature, both participating in a relentless unfolding of historical processes; compared to this vision, what were mere governments, economies, armies and bureaucracies? Prince Odoevskii thus describes the exaltation he and his friends experienced on being first exposed to these heady concepts:

"'What solemn, luminous, and joyful feeling permeated life once it had been shown that it was possible to explain the phenomena of nature by the very same laws to which the human spirit is subject in its evolution, seemingly to close forever the gap separating the two realms, and fashion them into a single receptacle containing the eternal idea and eternal reason. With what youthful and noble pride did we at that time envisage the share which had been allotted to man in this universal existence! By virtue of the quality and right of thought, man transposed visible nature within himself and analysed it in the innermost recesses of his own consciousness: in short, he became nature's focal point, judge and interpreter. He absorbed nature and in him it revived for rational and inspired existence… The more radiantly the eternal spirit, the eternal idea reflected themselves in man, the more fully did he understand their present in all the other realms of life. The culmination of the whole [Idealist] outlook were moral obligations, and one of the most indispensable obligations was to emancipate within oneself the divine share of the world idea from everything accidental, impure, and false in order to acquire the right to the blessings of a genuine, rational existence.'

"Of course, not all Russian intellectuals succumbed to such ecstasy. Idealism had also more sober followers, as, for example, among academic historians who took from Hegel little more than a general scheme of development of human societies. But in some degree, in the reign of Nicholas I (1825-55) Idealism was an all-pervading philosophy of the Russian intelligentsia, and its influence persisted well into the second half of the nineteenth century, after its principal tenets had been repudiated and replaced by materialism…"[694]

But idealism was not replaced only by materialism… Some of the Russian Hegelians became materialists and Marxists. But others began to return to the roots of Russian national and religious consciousness in the movement known as Slavophilism, whose members were influenced particularly by Schelling, and in particular by his concept, common among the Romantics, of a national soul or essence. "In the 1820s," writes Oliver Figes, "Schelling had a godlike status in Russia, and his concept of the soul was seized upon by intellectuals who sought to contrast Russia with Europe. Prince Odoevsky, the archpriest of the Schelling cult in Russia, argued that the West had sold its soul to the Devil in the pursuit of material progress. 'Your soul has turned into a steam engine,' he wrote in his novel *Russian Nights* (1844); 'I see screws and wheels in you , but I don't see life.' Only Russia, with her youthful spirit, could save Europe now. It stands to reason that young nations like Germany and Russia that lagged behind the industrializing West would have recourse to the idea of a national soul. What nations lacked in economic progress they could more than make up for in the spiritual virtues of the unspoilt countryside. Nationalists attributed a creative spontaneity and fraternity to the simple peasantry that had long been lost in the bourgeois culture of the

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[694] Pipes, *Russia under the Old Regime,* London: Penguin Books, 1995, pp. 259-261.

West. This was the vague Romantic sense in which the idea of the Russian soul began to develop from the final decades of the eighteenth century…"[695]

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Still more influential than Schelling was Hegel… Evans writes: "In the emerging world of the intelligentsia in Russia during the 1830s and 1840s, as Alexander Herzen, author of *Who is to Blame?* (1845-6), one of the first Russian social novels, later remembered, Hegel's writings were discussed deep into the night. 'Every insignificant pamphlet… in which there was a mere mention of Hegel was ordered and read until it was tattered, smudged, and fell apart in a few days.' Hegel's dialectic sharpened vague perceptions of the differences between East and West and forced Russian intellectuals to take sides. The literary critic Ivan Kireyevsky (1806-56), whose religious father was so vehemently hostile to the atheism of Voltaire that he bought multiple copies of the Frenchman's books solely in order to burn them in huge piles in his garden, attended Hegel's lectures in Berlin and concluded that Russia was destined to belong to the East, founding its society on collectivism rather than individualism, and building its moral character on the doctrines of the Orthodox Church. However, Hegel's philosophy of history convinced others that Russia was on a preordained trajectory towards a liberated future by acquiring the freedoms common in the West. The young literary critic, Vissarion Belinsky (1811-48) began labelling everything he thought backward in the culture and politics of his native land 'Chinese'. Herzen drew similar consequences from a reading of Hegel, but stopped short of advocating violent revolution in order to achieve them.

"That step was taken by the most radical of the Russian Hegelians, Mikhail Bakunin (1814-76), who imbibed the works of the German philosopher while studying in Moscow. Bakunin was a man of violent, volcanic temperament, described by his friend Belinsky as 'a deep, primitive, leonine nature', also notable, however, for 'his demands, his childishness, his braggadocio, his unscrupulousness, his disingenuousness'. In 1842, by now in Paris, Bakunin published a lengthy article urging 'the realization of freedom' and attacking 'the rotted and withered remains of conventionality'. The article breathed a spirit of Hegelianism so abstract that for long stretches it was almost incomprehensible. But it ended with a chilling prophecy of the violent, anarchist extremism of which Bakunin was the founding father: 'The passion for destruction is also a creative passion.' These sentiments expressed the influence of a group of German philosophers known as the Neo-Hegelians, whose atheism led to their expulsion by the pious King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm IV (1795-1861), soon after he came to the throne in 1840. Bakunin met them in Paris, publishing an article in one of their short-lived magazines, edited by Arnold Ruge (1802-80). It was also in Paris that Bakunin met another Hegelian, Karl Marx (1818-83), who was to be his rival in the small and intense world of revolutionary activists and thinkers for most of the rest of his life. The two men disliked each other on first sight. Marx, as Bakunin later recalled, 'called me a sentimental idealist, and he was right. I called him morose, vain and treacherous, and I too was right.'"[696]

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[695] Figes, *Natasha's Dance,* London: Penguin, 2002, pp. 113-114.

There were some positive things that the Russians gained from Hegelianism. Among them was the idea of universal history. Thus the great novelist Nicholas Gogol wrote: "Universal history, in the true meaning of the term, is not a collection of particular histories of all the peoples and states without a common link, plan or aim, a bunch of events without order, in the lifeless and dry form in which it is often presented. Its subject is great: it must embrace at once and in a complete picture the whole of humanity, how from its original, poor childhood it developed and was perfected in various forms, and, finally, reached the present age. To show the whole of this great process, which the free spirit of man sustained through bloody labours, struggling from its very cradle with ignorance, with nature and with gigantic obstacles – that is the aim of universal history! It must gather into one all the peoples of the world scattered by time, chance, mountains and seas, and unite them into one harmonious whole; it must compose out of them one majestic, complete poem. The event having no influence on the world has no right to enter here. All the events of the world must be so tightly linked amongst themselves and joined one to another like the rings of a chain. If one ring were ripped out, the chain would collapse. This link must not be understood in a literal sense: it is not that visible, material link by which events are often forcibly joined, or the system created in the head independently of facts, and to which the events of the world are later arbitrarily attached. This link must be concluded in one common thought, in one uninterrupted history of mankind, before which both states and events are but temporary forms and images! The must be presented in the same colossal size as it is in fact, penetrated by the same mysterious paths of Providence that are so unattainably indicated in it. Interest must necessarily be elicited to the highest degree, in such a way that the listener is tormented by the desire to know more, so that either he cannot close the book, or, if it is impossible to do that, he starts his reading again, so that it is evident how one event gives birth to another and how without the original event the last event would not follow. Only in that way must history be created…"[697]

However, it will be noted that there is no hint of Hegelian determinism in this picture: it is "the free spirit of man" that propels universal history forward. The determinism of Hegel did not attract the Russian thinkers; and characteristic of almost all of them was their emphasis on the importance of the individual and individual freedom. Those who inherited the Hegelians' determinism later took the more radical road of atheism and Marxism.

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[696] Evans, op. cit., pp. 176-177.

[697] Gogol, "O Prepodavanii Vseobschej Istorii" (On the Teaching of Universal History), in *Polnoe Sobranie Sochinenij* (Complete Works), vol. 8, pp. 50-51.

Another difference between the Hegelian and the Russian interest in history was the greater concentration, among the Russians, on Hegel's concept of "the historical nation", and on Herder's idea of the unique essence of every nation, which stimulated Russian thinkers to take a more historical and dialectical approach to the study of their own land. Thus the nobleman Peter Chaadaev, according to Andrej Kompaneets, "attached a great importance to history in his investigations. Chaadaev was sure: if humanity allowed itself to see in their true light the causes and consequences of the historical process, then even nationalities divided up to now 'would unite for the attainment of an agreed and general result'. The aim of the philosophy of history is 'to attain a clear representation of the general law governing the succession of epochs', but this law constituted a certain idea (a moral idea) moving civilizations. But when this idea is exhausted, the state perishes. Thus, for example, the Roman Empire, Egypt, Alexandria: 'these were rotting corpses; they (the barbarians – A.K.) only scattered their dust in the wind'."[698]

"What was the relationship between the old, pre-Petrine Russia and the new, post-Petrine Russia?" they asked. "Could these antithetical Russias be reconciled in a new synthesis of the future?" "Is it necessary decisively to choose the one and reject the other?"

More particularly, it was Hegel's failure "to find room for the Slavs", as G. Vernadsky put it, that provoked and intrigued the Russian intellectuals, both westerners like Chaadaev and Herzen and Slavophiles like Khomiakov and Kireyevsky. For Hegel wrote: "[The Slavs] did indeed found kingdoms and sustain vigorous conflicts with the various nations that came across their path. Sometimes, as an advance guard – an intermediate nationality – they took part in the struggle between Christian Europe and unchristian Asia. The Poles even liberated beleaguered Vienna from the Turks; and Slavs have to some extent been drawn within the sphere of Occidental Reason. Yet this entire body of peoples remains excluded from our consideration because hitherto it has not appeared as an independent element in the series of phases that reason has assumed in the world."[699]

Was Russia no more than "an intermediate nationality"?, asked the Russian intellectuals indignantly. Had History really passed the Slavs by? Were they just a footnote to "the sphere of Occidental Reason"? Or did they have something original to contribute? In the next stage of the historical dialectic perhaps? After all, if Hegel thought that the Romano-French period of history had been overtaken by the German, why should not the German in its turn be overtaken by the Slav?...[700]

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[698] Kompaneets, "Vo chto veril Chaadaev?" (In what did Chaadaev believe?), http://religion.russ.ru/people/20011206-kompaneets.html).

[699] Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*; quoted in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 175.

[700] Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: Empire & People,* London: HarperCollins, 1997, p. 270.

CONCLUSION. REVOLUTION AND COUNTER-REVOLUTION

France was readmitted to the concert of nations during the Congress of Vienna because the victorious powers judged that it was the ideology rather than the nation that was the real enemy, while former revolutionaries who no longer practised revolution could be forgiven. For, as Eric Hobsbawm writes, "it was now known that revolution in a single country could be a European phenomenon; that its doctrines could spread across the frontiers and, what was worse, its crusading armies could blow away the political systems of a continent. It was now known that social revolution was possible; that nations existed as something independent of states, peoples as something independent of their rulers, and even that the poor existed as something independent of the ruling classes. 'The French Revolution,' De Bonald had observed in 1796, 'is a unique event in history.' The phrase is misleading: it was a universal event.[701] No country was immune from it. The French soldiers who campaigned from Andalusia to Moscow, from the Baltic to Syria – over a vaster area than any body of conquerors since the Mongols, and certainly a vaster area than any previous single military force in Europe except the Norsemen – pushed the universality of their revolution home more effectively than anything else could have done. And the doctrines and institutions they carried with them, even under Napoleon, from Spain to Illyria, were universal doctrines, as the governments knew, and as the peoples themselves were soon to know. A Greek bandit and patriot expressed their feelings completely: "'According to my judgement,' said Koloktrones, 'the French Revolution and the doings of Napoleon opened the eyes of the world. The nations knew nothing before, and the people thought that kings were gods upon the earth and that they were bound to say that whatever they did was well done. Through this present change it is more difficult to rule the people.'"[702]

The French revolution had another long-term effect: it justified all kinds of crime in the name of politics. As Paul Johnson writes: "Perhaps the most significant characteristic of the dawning modern world, and in this respect it was a true child of Rousseau, was the tendency to relate everything to politics. In Latin America, every would-be plunderer or ambitious bandit now called himself a 'liberator'; murderers killed for freedom, thieves stole for the people. In Spain, during the 1820s, believers and nonbelievers, those who liked kings and those who hated them, began to regard their faith, or lack of it, as a justification for forming private armies which defied the lawful authorities. Organized crime now took a party label and put forward a program and thereby became better organized and a more formidable threat to society.

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[701] Hence Tom Paine's declaration: "My country is the world, and my religion is to do good" (*The Age of Reason* (1793)). (V.M.)

[702] Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848*, London: Abacus, 1992, pp. 116-117.

"Thus violence acquired moral standing and the public was terrorized for its own good. Many years before, Samuel Johnson, in upholding the rights of authority, had qualified his defense by pointing to a corresponding and inherent human right to resist oppression: 'Why all this childish jealousy of the power of the Crown?... In no government can power be abused long. Mankind will not bear it. If a sovereign oppresses his people to a great degree, they will rise and cut off his head.' The French Revolution had lowered the threshold of abuse at which men rose. It proved that cutting off royal heads was easier than had previously been thought and did not bring down the heavens. That undoubted fact was now a permanent temptation to every enemy of society who wished to acquire moral respectability for his crimes. It operated, in particular, throughout the Mediterranean area, where every government oppressed its subjects to some degree and there were usually no lawful forms of redress. In the past, men with a grievance had suffered in silence or taken to the hills and robbed. Now the hitherto resigned joined secret societies, and the bandits called themselves politicians."[703]

These secret societies continued the revolution on an international scale... The major powers had many problems in their struggle against them. One was that it required large resources and a much larger police (and secret police) apparatus than any state had hitherto possessed. Secondly, the powers were not united. France was still distrusted; Austria did not want Russian Cossacks settling problems on her territory; Britain, which had played such an important role in defeating Napoleon, was nevertheless not averse to helping this or that revolutionary movement (particularly in the Iberian Peninsula[704] and South America) if this suited her balance-of-power politics. Moreover, the British were opposed to "interventionism on ideological grounds, as practiced by the Holy Alliance, because its object was to impose or sustain a particular type of government, which ran directly counter to the *Zeitgeist*".[705]

The *Zeitgeist* was anti-monarchist; and even the monarchs felt they could not go completely against it. They made their first compromise with it in the conditions they imposed on France in 1818. For, as Hobsbawm writes, while "the Bourbons were restored,... it was understood that they had to make concessions to the dangerous spirit of their subjects. The major changes of the Revolution were accepted, and that inflammatory device, a constitution, was granted to them – though of course in an extremely moderate form – under the guise of a Charter 'freely conceded' by the returned absolute monarch, Louis XVIII."[706] Another compromise was the granting of senior posts to former revolutionaries, "reconciling", if that were possible, the reactionary King Louis XVIII with some of the men who had caused his brother Louis XVI's death.[707]

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[703] Johnson, *The Birth of the Modern, World Society 1815-1830*, London: Phoenix, 1992, p. 662.

[704] In Spain, for example, the left-wing and Masonic Isabelinos "were supported by Palmerston and by the British Legion of volunteers from Britain... They were also supported by the government of Louis Philippe [of France]. Metternich and Tsar Nicholas were not in a position to help the Carlists" (Jasper Ridley, *The Freemasons*, London: Constable, 1999, p. 200).

[705] Johnson, op. cit., p. 691.

[706] Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 129.

And yet making such concessions was only a short-term solution. For appeasement can never tame a really determined enemy, but rather whets his appetite for more. So it was no use saying, as Friedrich von Gentz, Metternich's secretary, said to the Laibach Congress of the Holy Alliance, 1821: "Revolution must be fought with flesh and blood. Moral weapons are manifestly powerless."[708] The truth was precisely the opposite: it was *moral* weapons that had to be found.[709] And it was a convincing moral and spiritual alternative to the revolution that was lacking, especially in the generation that had been born during Napoleon's ascendancy. "In his *Confession d'un Enfant du Siècle,* [Musset] describes a generation trapped in a limbo between two worlds. Old beliefs had been swept away, but nothing worthy of the name had been found to replace them. These young men had been born and bred to fight, but they had nothing to fight for. They felt robbed of greatness and demeaned by the new state of affairs. 'What is left for us to venerate?' Vigny asked rhetorically. 'In the universal shipwreck of faith, what debris are there at which generous hands can clutch?'"[710]

Some oppression was unavoidable; but it could not succeed for long on its own. Thus, as "Even Castlereagh's brother, Charles Stewart, ambassador in Vienna and otherwise sympathetic to Metternich, complained about his 'Inordinate Taste for Spies and Police', which tended to 'put the Employer more oftener on the wrong, rather than the *right* scent.' 'Your politics of oppression, which tolerates no resistance, is a fatal one and leads as surely to an explosion as a hermetically sealed cauldron which has no safety valve,' Lord Palmerston, British foreign secretary, told Metternich at the moment of his downfall in 1848."[711]

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[707] "Suddenly the door opened; and silently there entered vice leaning on the arm of crime, M. de Talleyrand supported by Fouché… the trusty regicide, kneeling, put the hand which had made Louis XVI's head roll in the hands of the martyred king's brother" (Viscount de Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outremer*, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 543).

[708] Genz, in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 542.

[709] Genz knew this as well as anyone. For he understood that the cause of the revolution lay in the changing religious beliefs of men, from the true religion to Protestantism to revolutionary secularism, even if he misidentified the true religion with Catholicism: "Protestantism is the first, the true, the only source of all the vast evils under which we groan today. Had it merely confined itself to reasoning, we might have been able and obliged to tolerate it, for a tendency to argue is rooted in human nature. However, once governments agreed to accept Protestantism as a permitted form of religion, an expression of Christianity, a right of man; once they… granted it a place in the State beside, or even on the ruins of, the only true church, the religious, moral and political order of the world was immediately dissolved… The entire French Revolution, and the even worse revolution which is about to break over Germany, have sprung from this same source." (in Hobsbawm, op. cit., p. 282).

[710] Zamoyski, *Holy Madness,* p. 190.

[711] John Bew, review of Adam Zamoyski's *Phantom Terror*, *Literary Review*, November, 2014, p. 20.

What was needed was another, more powerful spirit to oppose the corrupt spirit of the times, a positive doctrine of religious and political authority that was deeper and truer than the revolutionary doctrine. But none of the great powers was able to provide a positive teaching to reinforce and justify their alternately conciliatory and repressive measures, for the simple reason that none of them – with the exception of Russia – was Orthodox, and very few, even in Russia, were capable of communicating that positive message to those infected with the revolutionary contagion.

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The solutions that were offered harked back to failed ideologies of the Enlightenment and Medieval periods. The first was Kant's *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (1795), which contained the following axiom: "The law of nations shall be founded on a *federation* of free states". This was the Enlightenment answer to the problem of war: a world government.

Henry Kissinger writes that "Kant dared to see in the general upheaval [caused by the French revolution] the faint beginnings of a new, more peaceful international order.

"Humanity, Kant reasoned, was characterized by a distinctive '*unsocial stability*': the 'tendency to come together in society, coupled, however, with a continual resistance which constantly threatens to break this society up.' The problem of order, particularly international order, was 'the most difficult and the last to be solved by the human race'. Men formed states to constrain their passions, but like individuals in the state of nature each state sought to preserve its absolute freedom, even at the cost of 'a lawless state of savagery'. But the 'devastations, upheavals and even complete inner exhaustion of their powers' arising from interstate clashes would in time oblige men to contemplate an alternative. Humanity faced either the peace of 'the vast graveyard of the human race' or peace by reasoned design.

"The answer, Kant held, was a voluntary federation of republics pledged to non-hostility and transparent domestic and international conduct. Their citizens would cultivate peace because, unlike despotic rulers, when considering hostilities, they would be deliberating about 'calling down on *themselves* all the miseries of war.' Over time the attractions of the compact would become apparent, opening the way toward its gradual expansion into a peaceful world order. It was Nature's purpose that humanity eventually reason its way toward 'a system of united power, hence a cosmopolitan system of general political security' and '*a perfect civil union of mankind*'."[712]

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[712] Kissinger, *World Order,* London: Penguin, 2015, p. 40.

This purely rationalist answer to the problem of world peace has been tried in our time with the League of Nations and the United Nations. It has not worked. And the reason is not far to find: mankind is not as rational, either in its individual or collective forms, as to seek, let alone be satisfied with, a peaceful solution of its conflicting desires. There is an irrational, demonic element in fallen man that seeks, not life, but death, not peace, but war. This demonic element burst out in the French revolution, and was checked – but by no means exorcised completely – only by defeat on the battlefield.

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The other solution on offer was a return to submission to the Roman Catholic Church, a fervently anti-revolutionary power that was trying to make up for its lapse in the time of Napoleon. Thus in 1814 the Jesuit order was re-established. And in his encyclical *Mirari vos* (1832), Pope Gregory XVI declared that anti-monarchism was a crime against the faith, and that liberty of conscience flowed from "the most fetid fount of indifferentism".

The Vatican was supported by such writers as Chateaubriand, who in his *Genius of Christianity* (1802), an immensely influential book, combined Catholic Christianity with Romanticism around the idea of unity. "For Chateaubriand," writes George L. Mosse, "all things were interrelated, just as in the new music drama all arts had to cooperate in order to produce a unity of feeling. Christ reflected a harmony between God and humanity which was also reflected in nature. When he wrote about church bells he went on to link the effect they produced with the effect produced by winds, seas, volcanoes, and the voice of a whole people. All these caused a thousand hearts to feel the sentiment, the same unity of the emotions. This was what Chateaubriand called the sublime and the beautiful. 'There is one God, the grasses of the valleys and the trees of the mountains bless him, the elephant salutes him at the dawn of day, the birds sing in the foliage, the ocean declares his immensity.' Though romantic religion had a strong element of pantheism in it, Chateaubriand was not a pantheist. He believed that Christianity was reflected in a divine institution which operated on earth, the Catholic church.

"Catholicism was defended not on historical or even theological grounds, but because it reflected the harmony of all things. From the center at Rome branched out, in an orderly manner, missions, bishops, and the other services of the church which extended over the whole earth. Moreover, its liturgy contained the divine mysteries which, together with its centralized organization, reflected the cosmos which was Christian. Protestantism in contrast was chaos. It must be clear why Chateaubriand subtitled the book the *Beauty of Christianity*, for its truth was sublime by the standards of romanticism…

"Chateaubriand's justification of Catholicism was not an isolated phenomenon. Romanticism had a preference for this form of Christianity. It fitted in not only with the kind of ideology which Chateaubriand put forward, but also with the Romantics' Gothic vision of history…"[713]

According to Zamoyski, Chateaubriand "vindicated Christianity and presented it in a way that appealed to modern intellectuals. His vision of a spiritually refreshed Catholicism emerging from the blood and suffering of the revolution with a chivalric monarchism rising above the power struggles of the recent past, inspired most of the French Romantics. But submission to the will of God was no longer appealing to generations that had become used to the concept of the centrality of Man in the universe…"[714]

A more hard-headed Catholic vision was presented by two French aristocrats, Count Joseph de Maistre, a former envoy of Sardinia to Russia, and Viscount Louis de Bonald. Thus De Maistre wrote: "All grandeur, all power, all subordination rests on the executioner: he is the horror and bond of human association. Remove this incomprehensible agent from the world, and at that moment order gives way to chaos, thrones topple, and society disappears. God, Who is the author of sovereignty, is the author also of punishment."[715] Between God, the ultimate executioner, and kings, there is the power of the pope – the highest on earth. "Without the pope Christianity is no longer, and as an inevitable consequence, the social order is smitten in the heart. The church must be governed like any other organization; otherwise there would no longer be aggregation, cohesion, unity. This government is therefore by nature infallible, that is to say absolute; otherwise the pope would not govern… There is nothing shocking about the idea of all Christian rulers united by religious brotherhood in a kind of universal republic under the measured supremacy of the supreme spiritual power."[716]

Here is the idea of medieval Christendom reborn! And De Maistre's exaltation of the papacy and opposition to any kind of power independent of it was supported by De Bonald, who wrote: "Today… who does not see the danger of granting anyone and everyone… the terrible liberty to indoctrinate, in religion and in politics, a public which everywhere is made up largely of mistaken, ignorant, and violent men?… There is no true liberty of the press… except under the guarantee of censorship to prevent license of thought. There is no civil liberty without laws to prevent actions that create disorder."[717]

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[713] Mosse, *The Culture of Western Europe*, Boulder & London: Westview Press, 1988, pp. 49-50.

[714] Zamoyski, op. cit., p. 179.

[715] De Maistre, *The St. Petersburg Dialogues*; in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 543.

[716] De Maistre, *On the Pope*, 1819.

[717] De Bonald, *On Opposition to the Government and the Liberty of the Press*, 1827; in Cohen and Major, op. cit., p. 544.

Berlin writes: "What the entire Enlightenment has in common is denial of the central Christian doctrine of original sin, believing instead that man is born either innocent and good, or morally neutral and malleable by education or environment, or, at worst, deeply defective but capable of radical and indefinite improvement by rational education in favourable circumstances, or by a revolutionary reorganisation of society as demanded, for example, by Rousseau. It is this denial of original sin that the Church condemned most severely in Rousseau's *Émile*, despite its attack on materialism, utilitarianism and atheism. It is the powerful reaffirmation of this Pauline and Augustinian doctrine that is the sharpest single weapon in the root-and-branch attack on the entire Enlightenment by the French counter-revolutionary writers Maistre, Bonald and Chateaubriand, at the turn of the century.

"… The doctrines of Joseph de Maistre… formed the spearhead of the counter-revolution in the early nineteenth century in Europe. Maistre held the Enlightenment to be one of the most foolish, as well as the most ruinous, forms of social thinking. The conception of man as naturally disposed to benevolence, co-operation and peace, or, at any rate, capable of being shaped in this direction by appropriate education or legislation, is for him shallow and false. The benevolent Dame Nature of Hume, Holbach and Helvétius is an absurd figment. History and zoology are the most reliable guides to nature: they show her to be a field of unceasing slaughter. Men are by nature aggressive and destructive; they rebel over trifles – the change to the Gregorian calendar in the mid-eighteenth century, or Peter the Great's decision to shave the boyars' beards, provoke violent resistance, at times dangerous rebellions. But when men are sent to war, to exterminate beings as innocent as themselves for no purpose that either army can grasp, they go obediently to their deaths and scarcely ever mutiny. When the destructive instinct is evoked men feel exalted and fulfilled. Men do not come together, as the Enlightenment teaches, for mutual co-operation and peaceful happiness; history makes it clear that they are never so united as when given a common altar upon which to immolate themselves. This is so because the desire to sacrifice themselves or others is at least as strong as any pacific or constructive impulse.

"Maistre felt that men are by nature evil, self-destructive animals, full of conflicting drives, who do not know what they want, want what they do not want, do not want what they want, and it is only when they are kept under constant control and rigorous discipline by some authoritarian elite – a Church, a State, or some other body from whose decisions there is no appeal – that they can hope to survive and be saved. Reasoning, analysis, criticism shake the foundations and destroy the fabric of society. If the source of authority is declared to be rational, it invites questioning and doubt; but if it is questioned it may be argued away; its authority is undermined by able sophists, and this accelerates the forces of chaos, as in France during the reign of the weak and liberal Louis XVI. If the State is to survive and frustrate the fools and knaves who will always seek to destroy it, the source of its authority must be absolute, so terrifying, indeed, that the least attempt to question it must entail immediate and terrible sanctions: only then will men learn to obey it. Without a clear hierarchy of authority – awe-inspiring power – men's incurably destructive instincts will breed chaos and mutual extermination. The supreme power – especially the Church – must never seek to explain or justify itself in rational terms; for what one man can demonstrate, another may be able to refute. Reason is the thinnest of walls against the raging seas of violent emotion: on so insecure a basis no permanent structure can ever be erected. Irrationality, so far from being an obstacle, has historically led to peace, security and strength, and is indispensable to society: it is rational institutions – republics, elective monarchies, democracies, associations founded on the enlightened principles of free love – that collapse soonest; authoritarian Churches, hereditary monarchies and aristocracies, traditional forms of life, like the highly irrational institutions of the family, founded on life-long marriage – it is they that persist.

"The *philosophes* proposed to rationalise communications by inventing a universal language free from the irrational survivals, the idiosyncratic twists and turns, the capricious peculiarities of existing tongues; if they were to succeed, this would be disastrous, for it is precisely the individual historical development of a language belonging to a people that absorbs, enshrines and encapsulates a vast wealth of half-conscious, half-remembered collective experience. What men call superstition and prejudice are but the crust of custom which by sheer survival has shown itself proof against the ravages and vicissitudes of its long life; to lose it is to lose the shield that protects men's national existence, their spirit, the habits, memories, faith that have made them what they are. The conception of human nature which the radical critics have promulgated and on which their whole house of cards rests is an infantile fantasy. Rousseau asks why it is that man, who was born free, is nevertheless everywhere in chains; Maistre replies, 'This mad pronouncement, Man is born free, is the opposite of the truth.' 'It would be equally reasonable,' adds the eminent critic Émile Faguet in an essay on Maistre, 'to say that sheep are born carnivorous, and everywhere nibble grass.' Men are not made for freedom, nor for peace. Such freedom and peace as they have had were obtained only under wisely authoritarian governments that have repressed the destructive critical intellect and its socially disintegrating effects. Scientists, intellectuals, lawyers, journalists, democrats, Jansenists, Protestants, Jews, atheists – these are the sleepless enemy that never ceases to gnaw at the vitals of society. The best government the world has ever known was that of the Romans: they were too wise to be scientists themselves; for this purpose they hired the clever, volatile, politically incapable Greeks. Not the luminous intellect, but dark instincts govern man and societies; only elites which understand this, and keep the people from too much secular education, which is bound to make them over-critical and discontented, can give to men as much happiness and justice and freedom as, in this vale of tears, men can expect to have. But at the back of everything must lurk the potentiality of force, of coercive power.

"In a striking image Maistre says that all social order in the end rests upon one man, the executioner. Nobody wishes to associate with this hideous figure, yet on him, so long as men are weak, sinful, unable to control their passions, constantly lured to their doom by evil temptations or foolish dreams, rest all order, all peace, all society. The notion that reason is sufficient to educate or control the passions is ridiculous. When there is a vacuum, power rushes in; even the bloodstained monster Robespierre, a scourge sent by the Lord to punish a country that had departed from the true faith, is more to be admired – because he did hold France together and repelled her enemies, and created armies that, drunk with blood and passion, preserved France – than liberal fumbling and bungling. Louis XIV ignored the clever reasoners of his time, suppressed heresy, and died full of glory in his own bed. Louis XVI played amiably with subversive ideologists who had drunk at the poisoned well of Voltaire, and died on the scaffold. Repression, censorship, absolute sovereignty, judgements from which there is no appeal, these are the only methods of governing creatures whom Maistre described as half men, half beasts, monstrous centaurs at once seeking after God and fighting him, longing to love and create, but in perpetual danger of falling victims to their own blindly destructive drives, held in check by a combination of force and traditional authority and, above all, a faith incarnated in historically hallowed institutions that reason dare not touch.

"Nation and race are realities; the artificial creations of constitution-mongers are bound to collapse. 'Nations,' said Maistre, 'are born and die like individuals'; they 'have a common soul', especially visible in their language. And since they are individuals, they should endeavour to remain of one race. So too Bonald, his closest intellectual ally, regrets that the French nation has abandoned its racial purity, thus weakening itself. The question of whether the French are descended from Franks or Gauls, whether their institutions are Roman or German in origin, with the implication that this could dictate a form of life in the present, although it has its roots in political controversies in the sixteenth, seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, now takes the colour of mystical organicism, which transcends, and is proof against, all forms of discursive reasoning. Natural growth alone is real for Maistre. Only time, only history, can create authority that men can worship and obey: mere military dictatorship, a work of individual human hands, is brutal force without spiritual power; he calls it *bâtonocratie*, and predicts the end of Napoleon.

"In similar strain Bonald denounces individualism whether as a social doctrine or an intellectual method of analysing historical phenomena. The inventions of man, he declared, are precarious aids compared to the divinely ordained institutions that penetrate man's very being – language, family, the worship of God. By whom were they invented? Whenever a child is born there are father, mother, family, language, God; this is the basis of all that is genuine and lasting, not the arrangements of men drawn from the world of shopkeepers, with their contracts, or promises, or utility, or material goods. Liberal individualism inspired by the insolent self-confidence of mutinous intellectuals has led to the inhuman competition of bourgeois society, in which the strongest and the fastest win and the weak go to the wall. Only the Church can organise a society in which the ablest are held back so that the whole of society can progress and the weakest and least greedy also reach the goal.

"These gloomy [!] doctrines became the inspiration of monarchist politics in France, and together with the notion of romantic heroism and the sharp contrast between creative and uncreative, historic and unhistoric, individuals and nations, duly inspired nationalism, imperialism, and finally, in their most violent and pathological form, Fascist and totalitarian doctrines in the twentieth century." [718]

And yet Berlin was wrong in this last paragraph: one cannot attribute fascism and communism to the monarchical backlash against the French Revolution. Fascism, it is true, was based on worship of the people, its historical tradition and its State; but where did the worship of the people originate if not in the French Revolution? The counter-revolution did not worship the people, but *authority*. It would be truer to say that the roots of Fascism lay in both the rationalist Enlightenment, and the irrationalist Counter-Enlightenment, traditions. As for the Russian and other communist revolutions, they were in every way the descendants of the universalist and internationalist French Revolution.

But de Maistre was also wrong in thinking that the Catholic idea, the idea that the evil passions can be tamed by blind obedience to an unquestioned, absolute authority, could stop the revolution. The Catholic idea was now dead – Napoleon killed it when he took the crown from the Pope and crowned himself. Moreover, as we have seen, the conservative monarchs who defeated Napoleon and formed their "Holy Alliance" in 1815 had no place in their "Sacred Union" for the Pope...

Sir Richard Evans has argued that "figures like de Bonald and de Maistre were in fact marginal extremists".[719] He is right in the sense that their views were by this time minority opinions (at least in educated circles), and also in the sense that the kind of Christianity they represented has been on the retreat in Europe from that time to the present day. However, their idea that the West was rotting, in rapid decay, was not uninfluential.

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[718] Berlin, "The Counter-Enlightenment", in *The Proper Study of Mankind*, London: Pimlico, 1998, pp. 264-268.

[719] Evans, op. cit., p. 81.

As Berlin writes, "This was the doctrine which the Roman Catholic counter-revolutionaries at the turn of the century virtually invented, and it formed part of their view of the French Revolution as a divine punishment visited upon those who strayed from the Christian faith, and in particular that of the Roman Church. From France this denunciation of secularism was carried by many devious routes, mainly by second-rate journalists and their academic readers, to Germany and to Russia (to Russia both directly and via German versions), where it found a ready soil among those who, having themselves avoided the revolutionary upheavals, found it flattering to believe that they, at any rate, might still be on the path to greater power and glory, while the West, destroyed by the failure of its ancient faith, was fast disintegrating morally and politically…"[720]

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[720] Berlin, "The Hedgehog and the Fox", in *The Proper Study of Mankind,* London: Pimlico, 1998, p. 481.